

A STUDY OF THE IMAGERY OF THE ELEVENTH

CENTURY PANEGYRICIST AZRAQI OF HERAT

by

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A Thesis ~~Presented~~ for the Degree of ~~Ph.D.~~ M.Phil.

In the University of London 1973.



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A feature of the work of the eleventh century poet, Azraqī of Herat, is his use of elaborate and complex imagery. This thesis is a study of Azraqī's imagery with a view to examining his images and any allusions associated with them. A complete understanding of such features will lead to a better comprehension of the world in which the poet lived and worked.

To achieve this end a number of prominent themes in Azraqī's qaṣā'id have been examined. In general they may be divided into those of the intellectual sphere (the picture of the universe and philosophical ideas), themes associated with the natural world (the place of minerals and precious stones, flowers and animals), and aspects of the world created by man. This last-mentioned theme is mainly concerned with the conception of the king and his many attributes as presented by the poet; however, the poet's knowledge of the physical world, some luxury items and the importance of the Islamic and Iranian traditions in his verse have also been treated.

In order that this composite picture of the poet's world may be securely anchored in space and time, the biography of Azraqī is fully examined, as is the contemporary and modern attitude of critics towards his poetry and its place in the genre.

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### INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study of the eleventh century panegyrist, Azraqī of Herat. It is an examination of his work and his times as seen through his own eyes.

Although having a comparatively short *Dīvān*, the poet uses in his *qaṣṣa'id* many complex images that are rewarding for the purpose we have in hand. His importance as a poet lies in his attempt to develop to the maximum the imagery available to him within the permitted confines of the genre.

Nowadays, after the fashion of modern criticism, poetry may validly claim to mean different things to different people; every reader or listener may have his own interpretation and response. However, we are dealing with a group of poems that are close to a thousand years old. As well as this separation in time, for someone who is not a Persian, there is also a separation of space, and customs and culture. Our poet's meaning may be apparent; however, this may only be superficial, for there may be deeper layers of meaning in his images and allusions which might easily be missed without an appreciation of various aspects of the environment responsible for them. We tend to judge by our own canons, and we would be doing the poet an injustice if we did not attempt to understand what he meant by his own words. Such an understanding would be the first stage in the

evaluation and appreciation of his work; however, we do not regard this as our primary purpose. Our main concern is the explanation of allusions and the meaning of his verse. It is hoped that this is a new and valid approach.

To aid us in our task it is necessary to delve into the social and intellectual background of the period. The world reflected in the *Divān* of Azraqī is complementary to our understanding of his physical and intellectual environment. As such it may be a source for the social historian and complement dynastic histories. In our field poetry has been a neglected source for studying the thoughts and attitudes of the period.

A greater comprehension of the above points allied to the recent, and very competent, studies of style such as that by Mahjūb, and especially Shafī'ī-yi Kadkanī's work on imagery (see Bibliography), can only add to our knowledge and understanding of the genre and may lead to a tentative explanation of its longevity.

Certain reservations must be pointed out. The main problem is that the traditions of the genre, with regard to the themes and imagery employed by the poet, impose restrictions upon him. We must constantly be aware of these restrictions, and also of the fact that the very nature of the poet's task as a panegyrist makes him prone to exaggeration and lies. Yet even these points are aspects of the poet and his times which add to our understanding. Furthermore, we must always remember that our perspective is constricted by the thoughts and words of one man.

Rather than merely compiling an elaborate commentary or a series of lengthy footnotes - which in view of many editions of Persian

Dīvāns would be no bad thing - the attempt here is to build up a solid, albeit limited picture, which will act as a firm anchor-point for viewing the world of the poet.

The first part of the work deals with the biography of Azraqī, and its numerous problems, and the place of his Dīvān in the contemporary genre. We examine the form of the qasīda and the position the poet held amongst Classical critics and those of the present time.

The second, and from our point of view the more important part, takes the form of the division and analysis of certain themes. There have been too few attempts to explain specialised imagery and its ramifications during this period. Even the work of de Fouchécour, although comprehensive, does little by way of explanation.

Broadly the divisions concern themselves with the world above, i.e. the concept and picture of the universe (and the intellectual perspective), the world about us, i.e. the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms, and man and his position in the world, which is mainly the world of the mandūh. Although this division is a convenient one, it was not chosen wholly without prejudice, for it is itself typical of the Medieval Weltanschauung as reflected by its philosophers and which owes its origin to the Classical world. Indeed it is typical of the prevalent contemporary conservative attitude in which everything has its own rightful appointed place.

In all of the themes examined, one is struck by the consistency the poet shows with traditional knowledge. Thus he is a mirror of his times.

The system of transliteration used is that of the Cambridge

History of Islam with modifications for Persian as recommended in  
Iran.

Like most candidates presenting a thesis, I am indebted to my supervisor. Without the vigilance, advice and help of Dr. T. O. Gandjei I would have made little progress; I am also indebted to the assistance of Professor A. K. S. Lambton. I must also thank my many friends for their encouragement and help, especially Mr. Simon Digby.

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### BIOGRAPHY

As the main task of this thesis is to show how the Medieval Islamic world is reflected through the dīvān of a single poet - Azraqī of Herat - it is necessary to gather as much information about his life as possible. This will have the result of presenting us with a narrow span of time and a more precise picture.

As with many poets of the pre-Mongol period, our knowledge of Azraqī is scanty and often conflicting, his career remaining somewhat shadowy. An example of our present state of knowledge may be seen from the various dates which are given for his death. Thus, Nafīsī in his introduction to the Dīvān (1) states that his death occurred in 526/1131-2 or 527/1132-3; Browne (2) says he died in 524/1130 and de Fouchécour (3) writes that he must have died before 465/1072-3. Naturally two and possibly all of these statements are incorrect. What seems most astonishing is that these dates span up to sixty years, a period which in itself may be regarded as an average lifetime.

It will be seen from the sources that we have consulted that a great deal of new information on the life of Azraqī is not forthcoming. However, we can untangle some of the conflicting reports which we have. To aid the task we have had recourse to investigate the two principle mamdūhān of the poet, Amīrānshāh b. Qāvurd and

Ṭughānshāh b. Alp Arslān, who being documented to various degrees, will help define the era during which Azraqī lived and wrote. The other personages who are credited with having received the praises of Azraqī are far less important than those I have already referred to, for they are either mainly unknown to us or the poems written in their honour are to be considered as spurious (4). This view is reinforced by the fact that the sources we have consulted refer only to Amīrānshāh and Ṭughānshāh as being patrons of Azraqī. Therefore, for convenience, we shall treat the career of Azraqī in two sections; his period under Amīrānshāh and that under Ṭughānshāh.

#### The First Period

The date of Azraqī's birth is not known, but Amīrānshāh b. Qāvurd seems to be his earliest patron. This Saljūq prince was the ninth and youngest son of Qāvurā (5), who took control of the province of Kirmān shortly after the death of Abū Kālījār in 440/1048-9 (6). Of Amīrānshāh and his court-poet, Azraqī, we have the testimony provided by Ibn Ibrāhīm in his History of the Saljūqs of Kirmān (7), which history is a rescension of that of Aḥmad b. Hāmid, which recorded events in the area up to the year 582/1186 (8). One passage is of particular interest to us:

"Qāvurdshāh waged war on the borders of Kirmān. Amongst them his son Amīrānshāh fought the Sagzīs at the gate (darband) of Sajistān for six months. Hakīm Azraqī mentions this battle in a qaṣīda which he composed in praise of Amīrānshāh b. Qāvurd." (9)

He then proceeds to quote the first part of a qaṣīda which is numbered 13 in Nafīsī's edition. The date of this campaign is not known. It is unfortunate that the Tārīkh-i Sīstān does not mention

it, for the text has a seventeen year gap from 448/1056-465/1071-2 (10).

However, this particular qaṣīda begins as follows:

بگویند خوشی عید و ماه آذر  
فجسته باد بر سرگاه مظفر

"May the blessed festival of 'Īd and the month of Āzar be auspicious upon the victorious king."

The festival of 'Īd referred to may be either the 'Īd al Fitr or even 'Īd al Qurban. If we assume that the festival at the end of Ramaḍān is intended, then a convenient synchronisation of dates is possible. The 'Īd al Fitr coincided with the month of Āzar during this period in the year 449/1057 and 450/1058. This is also within the period when the Tārīkh-i Sīstān is silent. It may be therefore that this poem provides a missing date.

Ibn Ibrāhīm also records that Azraqī wrote about ten qaṣīdas in praise of Amīrānshāh (11). Further we also learn of the fate of this prince. When Qāvurd rebelled upon the accession of his nephew, Malikshāh, he was defeated by the young Sulṭān and along with his sons, Amīrānshāh and Sulṭānshāh, was captured. Qāvurd was strangled with a bow-string and his sons were blinded (12). This occurred in 465/1073 (13). To all intents and purposes this was the end of Amīrānshāh. It is tempting to agree with Nafīsī that after the blinding of his patron, Azraqī moved off to Herat and the court of Ṭughānshāh (14). However we would prefer to discuss this statement below. Although we have no reason to doubt that Azraqī went from the court in Kirmān straight to Ṭughānshāh in Herat, the date at which he did so is one for discussion.

The assumption that Azraqī moved from the court of Amīrānshāh

to Herat is in itself by no means proven. Although the name of Herat is often mentioned in the *Dīvān* it is always associated with Ṭughānshāh, not the son of Qāvurd. A number of <sup>possibilities</sup> ~~alternatives~~ are open to us: we may assume that Azraqī did move with the court of his two main patrons; it is not clear that Amīrānshāh's court was ever at Kirman, but this prince did spend a long period campaigning in Sistan; did he visit Herat, which was readily accessible, and present Azraqī with an opportunity to praise him? Finally there is the possibility that qaṣā'id in his honour were sent to him by Azraqī.

#### The Second Period

Our knowledge of Amīrānshāh and Azraqī appears to be quite straightforward, mainly due to the brevity of the sources. When we turn to Ṭughānshāh b. Alp Arslān, the matter is found to be otherwise; there are many references to Ṭughānshāh; unfortunately he remains something of a mystery character, for many questions concerning him still remain unanswered and there is no consistency in the sources. Of especial interest to us are the dates of his sojourn in Herat and hence of Azraqī's presence at his court.

Ṭughānshāh is the mandūh par excellence of Azraqī; whenever Azraqī is referred to, Ṭughānshāh is always given as being his patron. The earliest notice we have of Azraqī is that given in the Chahār Maqāla of Nizāmī 'Arūqī of Samarqand. The famous episode when Abū Bakr Azraqī soothes an angry Ṭughānshāh, who has failed to make a winning throw at backgammon, has been fully treated before (15). The tale is always given as an excellent example of the Persian poet's ability to improvise and the high esteem in which such



improvisation was held.

The Chahār Maqāla, which dates from the middle of the twelfth century, also gives us some information about the circumstances of our poet and his prince. Azraqī is one of a number of poets who adorn the court of Ṭughānshāh, who was famous for his love of poetry and other pleasures available to a monarch. The other poets named are Amīr 'Abd Allāh Qarshī, Abū Maṣūūr Bā Yūsuf, Shujā'ī-yi Nasavī, Ahmad Badīhī, Ḥaḳīqī and Nasīmī. It is also to be noted that at this time Ṭughānshāh must have been quite young, for he is called a child (kūdak). Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī learnt of the rich rewards Azraqī received for his improvisation from Abū Maṣūūr Bā Yūsuf, whom he met in Herat in 509/1115.(16). It would be of value to know when this improvising occurred. At the present time, we would like to make the following points: we must probably regard Ṭughānshāh as being a youth or adolescent at the date of this episode; we do not know who the ruling Sultān is; assuming that the Chahār Maqāla was written about the year 550/1155, then its author must have met Azraqī's contemporary, Abū Maṣūūr, and heard the story more than forty years previously.

The next notice of Azraqī is found in Muḥammad 'Awfī's Lubāb al Albāb, 618/1221. Ṭughānshāh is named as the mamdūh of the poet, whose name is given as al Ḥakīm Sharaf al Zamān Abū Muḥāsīn al Azraqī al Hiravī. We are also told that Azraqī preceded Mu'izzī, the poet-laureate of Sanjar, in time, but not in rank although they were almost contemporary (qarīb al 'ahd). It is also to 'Awfī that we owe the earliest mention of Azraqī having composed Alfiyya va Shalfiyya for Ṭughānshāh. It is related that Ṭughānshāh was

sexually incapacitated; in order to rekindle his master's passion, Azraqī composed this work and also had it illustrated. The king was also made to watch unseen a newly-wedded couple reading and looking at the book. The effect was most beneficial. Obviously the king is no longer a child as related in Chahār Maqāla. As the anecdote of the game of backgammon is not mentioned, it is likely that 'Awfī is following different sources. He also includes a number of poems by Azraqī (17).

Alfiyya va Shalfiyya is non-extant (18), as is his other work the Sindbādnāma. Although this is referred to in later sources, such as Dawlatshāh (19), we have the most reliable evidence that Azraqī wrote such a work, for it is referred in his own Dīwān:

1.191:

از کبیه دروغ نهم پیشی ریشی او      تاریخ شاهانه و اخبار سندباد

"From my purse of lies, I place before his beard the history of the Shāhnāma and the events of Sindbād."

and also possibly 1.2275:

هر که بینه شهریار پندای سندباد      نیک داند کاندرو دسوار پند ساری

"O, King, whoever looks into the counsels of Sindbād, knows well the art of poetry may be difficult."

This is the sum of our knowledge of Azraqī's work. We shall now try to place him in time.

The circumstances of Tughānshāh's life are by no means clear.

A useful starting point is the reference found in Isfizārī's history of Herat, entitled Rawḍāt al Jannāt fi Awḡāf-i Madīnat-i Hirāt, written 897-899/1492-94. Here we find the following:

"Then Sultān Alp Arslān sent his son Shams al Dawla, Ṭughānshāh, to Herat. After that Ṣahīr al Mulk Abū Naṣr Sa'īd b. Muḥammad al Maw ... (my printed edition was defective at this point) was the governor (wālī) of Herat until the time of Alp Arslān's death. Malikshāh b. Alp Arslān succeeded and he entrusted Herat to his brother, Ṭughānshāh. He bestowed the vizirate as did his father upon Khwāja Nizām al Mulk. Then Ṭughānshāh began to be rebellious and disobedient, he was desirous of depravity, killed personages of knowledge (ahālī-yi 'ilm) and reconciled himself with the associates of oppression. His brother dismissed him and imprisoned him in the Qal'a of Isfahan. He sent one of his servants, Amīr Zībaq to Herat. Then having dismissed him, Mu'ayyid al Mulk Abū Bakr 'Abd Allāh b. Nizām al Mulk became governor of Herat until the heretical Fidā'īs martyred Khwāja Nizām al Mulk on the 10th Ramadān, 485." (20)

The sources for this information are not indicated by the author. The passage seems to suggest that Ṭughānshāh's stay in Herat may be divided into two periods; the first whilst Alp Arslān, his father, was Sultān. And the second during the sultanate of his brother, Malikshāh.

During the reign of his father, Ṭughānshāh's status in Herat is by no means made clear, for it is stated that not he, but a certain Ṣahīr al Mulk Abū Naṣr was the actual governor of the province. (21) The most likely answer is that Ṭughānshāh was too young to exercise

power. He was also his father's third son (22), and since his elder brother, Malikshāh was only eighteen when he ascended the throne (23) in 465/1072, Tughānshāh must have been at least an adolescent whilst his father was the ruler. Thus the story of the game of backgammon mentioned above probably took place during the last years of his father's reign. If this is so, Azraqī must have left the court of Amīrānshāh (if ever there), before the latter, in company with his father, rebelled against the new Sultān, Malikshāh, in 465/1073. The other possibility is that Azraqī went to Herat when Tughānshāh was appointed by his brother which presumably occurred as soon as he succeeded his father; at this time Tughānshāh would still have been young.

Tughānshāh's end was imprisonment in Isfahan after rebelling against his brother, the Sultān. The nature of his rebellion does not seem to be one of armed insurrection, but rather the tale of his misdeeds as a ruler. Also the date is not indicated. Another source adds to our knowledge, for Mehmet Altay Köymen, in an article on Tughānshāh, quotes an unpublished manuscript of the thirteenth century Syrian historian Sibṭ Ibn al Jawzī's Mir'āt al Zamān:

' "When Malikshāh was moving from Balkh to Sarakhs, the 'sāhib-i bilād' (i.e. Tughānshāh) came before him and presented gifts. However in the same assembly he became drunk and said to his brother: O, Sultān, you give everything to those who rebel against you and despise those who are obedient to you."

According to this source, he was alluding to himself and his brother Tekish. Malikshāh was angry, seized him and sent him to

Isfahān. Malikshāh wrote a letter, demanding the castle wherein were Tughānshāh's mother, children and property. His mother after hesitation obeyed.' (24)

Of Tughānshāh's fate there seems little doubt. However, the revolt of Tughānshāh is here seen to be a verbal one. Moreover his brother, Tekish, rose against the Sultān, Malikshāh, on two occasions; the dates of both are known; what must be decided is which revolt is to be associated with Tughānshāh's outburst and subsequent deposition.

Shihāb al Dīn Tekish was granted Balkh and Tukhāristān upon the accession of his brother. However a few years later, he was joined by a body of dissatisfied troops who had been dismissed from the service of the Sultān. He rebelled; having been beaten in the race for Nishābūr by Malikshāh, he retired to Tirmidh where he was besieged. He surrendered but was pardoned; this occurred in 473/1080-1. Four years later he again rebelled. Malikshāh raced across Iran from Iraq. Tekish, whose forces were held up at Sarakhs, was captured and Malikshāh had him blinded. (25)

Since according to Ibn al Jawzī, Tughānshāh suggested that the Sultān forgave those who rebelled against him, the first revolt seems the one referred to; Tughānshāh would hardly say such a thing if Malikshāh had just blinded the rebel, his own brother. And as Tirmidh can hardly be regarded as being on the route from Balkh to Sarakhs he was most probably returning by this time to Iraq; also the source says Tughānshāh went before the Sultān. During the second revolt it is difficult to imagine the Sultān rushing from Iraq to

Sarakhs via Balkh. However, the second revolt was crushed at Sarakhs. There is a little more evidence which strangely enough seems to point to the latter revolt as the one meant; furthermore, should this be the case, then the sources are obviously inconsistent. This evidence is hard to rebuff, for it comes from numismatic sources and the *Dīvān* of Azraqī itself.

The numismatic evidence is based on a coin found in eastern Khurāsān, naming Ṭughānshāh with the date 476/1083-4 (26). Tekish's first revolt took place in 473/1081-2. Qaṣīda 19 begins as follows:

خوشی و نگو ز بیم رسید عید و بهار بسی نکوتر و خوشتر زیار و از پیران

"'Īd and Bahār happily arrived together; it is better and finer than last year and the year before."

The 'Īd al Fiṭr coincided with the 24th March in the year 474/1082, again subsequent to Tekish's first revolt. All this suggests that Ṭughānshāh had not yet been deposed.

Other sources do not help in this respect. For example Raverṭy's notes to the *Tabāqāt-i Nāsiri*, the sources for which he does not name, are quite confused as to the characters involved and the dates. (27) Later sources are less reliable as we shall indicate.

As for Azraqī, the most we can say is that apart from the *qaṣā'id* and other works he wrote in honour of Ṭughānshāh, he was most probably at his court whilst Malikshāh was Sulṭān and possibly even earlier.

#### Other Sources

The sources we now wish to consider were written much later than the era under consideration. As such, they are less reliable

and give us little new information. However, by considering them, we shall try to point out their inaccuracies and explain their misunderstandings.

Dawlatshāh's notice on Azraqī says that the poet was patronised by Tughānshāh (who, moreover, has been promoted by this time to the level of Sultān). He also relates that Azraqī composed for him the book of Sindbād and quotes Chahār Maqāla on the subject of Azraqī's improvisation to calm the anger of his patron. The reasons for the composition of Alfiyya va Shalfiyya he relates, not as one might expect from Muhammad 'Awfī, but from the history of Fakhr-i Banākati. We assume he is referring to Abū Sulaymān Dāwud b. Abū'l Fadl Muḥammad Banākati, who was at the court of Ghazan Khān and more or less produced a history cribbed from that of Rashīd al Dīn (28). He also suggests that Azraqī hailed from Marv (29)! This fact is not found in any other of the sources consulted. Presumably it is also the origin of 'Abd al Rasūlī's statement to the same effect in the forward to his edition of the Dīvān (30). As is apparent, Dawlatshāh in so many other details is quite inaccurate and there is no reason to give him any credence for this piece of information. It is known from the earliest literary source we have consulted, the Chahār Maqāla, that Azraqī's father lived in Herat and was a bookseller by trade (31). We must assume that Azraqī was born in that city.

The error may be the fault of copyists reading marv for harī.

When speaking of Tughānshāh, Dawlatshāh is often in error. Thus he says: "The residence of his sultanate was in Nīshāpūr. He built a Chahār Bāgh and a palace in Nīshāpūr called the Nigāristān. Today the former place is an area of Nīshāpūr and the ruins of the palace

are called Till-i Tughānshāh." Dawlatshāh has here confused Azraqī's Tughānshāh with another later prince of the same name, as we shall explain later.

We also read the baffling tale of how the young Tughānshāh fought against Ibrāhīm b. Inal, was captured by him and then blinded. In his grief, Tughānshāh composed a few bayts, which brought tears to the eyes of his maternal uncle, Tughril Beg (sic). Tughril slew Ibrāhīm for the punishment he had inflicted on Tughānshāh. (32). Little credence can be given to this story; Ibrāhīm b. Inal did revolt against Tughril, who sent Alp Arslān and his brothers Qāvurd and Yāqūtī against him and on being defeated Ibrāhīm was strangled with a bow-string; these events took place in 451/1059 (33) at a time when Malikshāh, Tughānshāh's elder brother, was about four years old; one cannot even be certain that Tughānshāh was yet born.

The Haft Iqlīm also has a notice on Hakīm Azraqī. Its author has plainly consulted 'Awfī, as can be seen by a comparison of the following few lines:

Haft Iqlīm (34)

ازرقی که فلک ازرق دوار از  
رنگ عروسخان او بدوار بستند  
سوی و ادوار سعود سپهر از زادن  
میل او عقیق مانده

'Awfī (35)

فلک دوار از رنگ  
عروسخان او بدوار بستند  
بودی و ادوار سعود سپهر از  
زادن میل او عقیق مانده



Amīn Ahmad Rāzī also mentions the mode of the composition of Alfiyya va Shalfiyya, the Chahār Maqāla, and states that Azraqī's Dīvān consists of about two thousand bayts and is common in his times.

When commenting on Azraqī's patron, here called Shams al Dawla wa'l Dīn Ṭughānshāh, Amīn Ahmad is careful to point out that there were two Ṭughānshāhs, to one of whom Ṭughril and Chaghrī were the maternal uncles (sic) and of whom Azraqī was the panegyrist; the other lived in the time of Sanjar, after whose death his aspirations to power were thwarted by the Khwārazmshāhs. This is where Dawlatshāh has become confused; indeed the Majma 'al Fusahā' names Azraqī's (36) patron as Ṭughānshāh b. Mu'ayyid. This Ṭughānshāh lived much later than Azraqī's mandūh. Mu'ayyid al Dīn Abā (d. 569/1174) was one of the most powerful of Sanjar's ghulāms, who established himself in Nīshāpūr after Sanjar's death (37). The Khwārazmshāh, Tekish, defeated his son and successor, Ṭughānshāh, so that both Nīshāpūr and Tūs fell into his hands (576/1181). Ṭughānshāh died in 581/1185 or the following year (38).

The confusion shown by some of the sources between these two Ṭughānshāhs may not be due solely to the fact that their names are the same, for according to Jūzjanī in the Tabaqāt-i Nāsirī, the disposition of the later Ṭughānshāh was similar to that of his earlier namesake:

"He used to spend his days in pleasure, in singing, and convivial meetings, along with his confidants and favourites, minstrels and singers and boon companions.

..... He passed his whole time in pleasure and jollity, dancing

and wine-drinking; and, for the sake of his own pleasure and merriment, he had the sleeves of his vest made each about ten ells in length, to which small golden bells were fastened, and he would himself join in the dance. He soon took his departure from this world." (39)

Finally we have the late work Majma 'al Fusahā' (1284/1867). Azraqī is here named as Hakīm Zayn al Dīn Abū Bakr Azraqī-yi Hiravī. Apart from the misnaming of the poet's patron already mentioned, we have the usual references to the composition of Alfiyya va Shalfiyya, the Sindbādnāma and the episode related in the Chahār Maqāla. The date of Azraqī's death is given as 526/1131-2, (40). This date, or the following year, is that mentioned by Nafīsī as being given by other sources (41) for the death of the poet.

### Conclusions

From the sources consulted it is possible to construct Azraqī's name in full. Nafīsī, basing his argument on a line in the Dīvān, suggests that his name may be 'Ja'far (42). Also the Chahār Maqāla says that it was Azraqī's father, Isma'īl al Warrāq (the bookseller), who sheltered the fleeing Firdawsī from Maḥmūd's agents (43). Thus his full name and titles are as follows: Sharaf al Zamān 'Abū'l Muḥāsīn Zayn al Uḥn Abū Bakr Ja'far b. Isma'īl Warrāq-i Hiravī.

It will be noted that in many of the sources Azraqī is given the title of hakīm. 'Awfī is the first to do this. Why he should do so is not known. Many of Azraqī's colleagues were given titles, but hakīm is not a title given for prowess in the poetic arts. It would normally be understood to confer recognition of scientific knowledge, or philosophy or medicine. Judging from the poet's wide knowledge of the heavens (examined below), he may have had some training in this branch of knowledge.

With regard to his work we may make the following statement: Azraqī wrote qaṣīdas in praise of Amīrānshāh and Ṭughānshāh, and furthermore composed, whilst in the service of the latter the Book of Sindbād and Alfiyya va Shalfiyya (44). Casting aside those qaṣā'id, which, as has been mentioned, are suspected of being spurious, the remaining patrons remain mainly anonymous except in his poetry (45).

As has already been stated above the date of Azraqī's birth is not known; likewise there are a number of conflicting dates given for his death, whose value must be doubted because they seem to

originate from very late sources. That the poet began composing when young and was still composing when old is established from lines in the *Dīvān*, as Nafīsī points out (46), being a young man under Amīrānshāh and old under Ṭughānshāh. Let us assume for the sake of argument, that his qasīda to Amīrānshāh on his campaign in Sīstān may be correctly dated to the year 449/1057, and let us further assume that he was a young man of twenty when it was written. Then if he did die in about 526/1130, his age was at least seventy-seven. It may not be unreasonable to suggest that this is indeed the case. Yet against this one must consider the fact that, compared with other poets of his era, his output of two thousand bayts or so must be considered as very small, especially as he must have been quite prolific to have produced his other two non-extant works whilst he was with Ṭughānshāh. He would only have been about fifty years old when Ṭughānshāh was deposed; what did he do with the remaining years of his life?

BIOGRAPHY - NOTES

- 1) Divān-i Azraqī, ed. S. Nafīsī, Tehran 1336, Introduction p.5.
- 2) E. G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, vol.11, C.U.P. 1969, p. 298.
- 3) C.-H de Fouchécour, La description de la nature dans la poésie lyrique persane du Xle siècle, Paris 1969, p.184.
- 4) These poems are listed in Nafisi's Introduction p.15.
- 5) E. von Zambaur, Manuel de généologie et de chronologie pour l'histoire de l'Islam, Hanover 1927, vol. 11 table R; Nafīsī, p.7 of the Introduction disagrees, saying that Amīrānshāh was the fourth of Qāvurd's seven sons. The matter is not of great importance.
- 6) Cambridge History of Iran, vol. V, C.U.P. 1968, p.59.
- 7) Muhammad b. Ibrāhīm, Tārīkh-i Saljūqiyan-i Kirmān, ed. M. T. Houstma in Recueil de Textes, vol. I, Leiden 1886.
- 8) Nafīsī, Introduction p.4.
- 9) Ibn Ibrāhīm, p.10.
- 10) Tārīkh-i Sīstān, ed. Bahār, Tehran 1314, p.382.
- 11) Ibn Ibrāhīm, p.
- 12) Ibid, p.13.
- 13) Camb History, p.88

- 14) Nafīsī, Introduction p.8
- 15) Browne, op. cit., p.39
- 16) Niẓāmī 'Arūdī Samarqandī, Chahār Maqāla, ed. Qazvīnī, London 1927, pp.49-50.
- 17) Muḥammad 'Awfī, Iubāb al Albāb, vol. 11, ed. E. G. Browne, London and Leiden 1903, pp. 86-104.
- 18) Although we know of no manuscript of this work, 'Alī 'Abd al Rasūlī, Dīvān-i Ḥakīm Azraqī-yi Harayī, Tehran 1336, on page ha of the Introduction, suggests that there are mss. of this work in Iran; however they are not illustrated. See also note 44.
- 19) Dawlatshāh, Tadhkiratu 'sh-Shu'arā', ed. E. G. Browne, London and Leiden 1901, p. 72.
- 20) Mu'īn al Dīn Muḥammad Zamchī Isfizārī, Rawḍāt al Jannāt fi Awsāf-i Madīnat-i Hirāt, ed. Imām, Tehran 1338, p.389.
- 21) An 'Iraqī historical source for the period, Akhbār al Dawla al Saljūqiyya, ed. Süßheim, Prologomena zu einer Ausgabe der im Britischen Muzeum zu London verwahrten Chronik des Seldschugischen Reiches, Leipzig 1911, serves only to add mystery concerning the sovereignty of this area of the empire.

Thus under the reign of Tughril, p.18:

وَلَا بُدَّ عَلَى الْقِسْمِ بْنِ مَوْسَى بْنِ سَبُوقٍ هِرَا [ه] وَ بُوْسَاجٍ وَ سَجِسْتَانَ وَ بِلَادَ الْغُورِ

وَهَذَا كُلُّهُ فِي سَنَةِ ثَلَاثِينَ وَارْبَع مِائَةٍ

And under Malikshāh, p.59:

وَنَوَاضِي بَرَاةٍ وَ نَوَاضِي غُورٍ وَ غَرْمِسْتَانَ إِلَى أَصْحَابِ الْمَلِكِ بُورِي بُرْسِي

- 22) Zambaur, loc. cit.
- 23) Camb. History, p.68.
- 24) M. A. Köymen, Selcuklu Hükümdari Togan Şah, in Memorial Volume to Necati Iugal.
- 25) Camb. History, pp. 81,90-1 and 220.
- 26) Zambaur, loc. cit., note.
- 27) Minhāj b. Sarāj Jūzjānī, Tabaqāt-i Nāsirī, trans. H. G. Raverty, vol. 1, New Delhi 1970, p. 138 n.8 and p. 143 n.2.
- 28) W. Barthold, Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasions, London 1968, p. 49.
- 29) Dawlatshah, P.72.
- 30) 'Abd al Rasūlī, Introduction p.1.
- 31) Browne, p.135.
- 32) Dawlatshāh, loc. cit.
- 33) Camb. History, p.44.
- 34) Amīn Ahmad Rāzī, Haft Iqlīm, ed. Javād Fādīl, Tehran c.1960, vol.111, pp.138-9.
- 35) 'Awfī, p.86.
- 36) Ridā Qulī Khān, Majma' al Fusahā', Tehran (litho), vol.1. p.139.
- 37) Camb. History, p.155-56.
- 38) *ibid*, p.189-90.
- 39) Jūzjānī, p.181-2
- 40) Ridā Qulī Khān, loc. cit.
- 41) Nafīsī, Introduction, p.4.
- 42) *ibid*, p.5. Also 'Abd al Rasūlī doubts that 'Ja'far' is part of his name, see his introduction page 1.

- 43) Browne, p. 135.
- 44) See M.Mahjūb, Sabk-i Khurāsānī dar Shi'r-i Fārsī, Tehran 1967, pp.598-9 and p.608, where the author refers to Azraqī's involvement with Sindbādnāma and Alfiyya va Shalfiyya. He is of the opinion that Azraqī either versified again the former, which was first done by Rūdākī from Abū'l Favāris's translation from Pahlavī under Nūh b. Mansūr, or at least began it. With regard to the latter he says that there is a copy in the Salṭanatī library though not by Azraqī. See n.18.
- 45) For other prominent mandūhan of Azraqī, see Nafīsī's Introduction pages nine and ten.
- 46) Nafīsī, p.6.



- 2 -

### DĪVĀN AND GENRE

The qaṣā'id of Azraqī are our concern. Two printed editions are available, that of Sa'īd Nafīsī and that of 'Alī 'Abd al Rasūlī. In both of these Dīvāns, as well as qaṣā'id, there are a number of rubā'īyyāt and qit'āt. As Nafīsī has compiled his edition from a larger number of manuscripts (1), we have used his edition as the basis for our study; where necessary (and possible) reference has been made to 'Abd al Rasūlī. The latter also has some useful marginal notes, whereas Nafīsī is deficient in this respect, and has no notes to speak of.

Nafīsī's editions has sixty-six qaṣīdas totalling 2364 lines (2). Of these poems, the editor believes a number to be of doubtful authenticity and these we have not considered; they are poems 3, 4, 6, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 33, 36, 38, 39 and 42, (3). Poem 23 to Maṣṣūr b. Sa'īd is almost certainly the work of 'Uthmān Mukhtārī (4). The total number of lines to be ascribed to Azraqī is 2012. Thirteen qaṣā'id are clearly in praise of Ṭughānshāh and nine are dedicated to Amīrānshāh. In the others the mamdūh is either unnamed or they are usually in praise of persons, who are government officials and ministers about whom nothing is known.

'Abd al Rasūlī's edition contains fifty-one poems. Those on pages 9, 94 and 110 are stated by the editor as not being the work

of Azraqī; of the others only those on pages 45 and 47 are not found in Nafīsī and as the mamduḥān of these two poems are obscure and not praised elsewhere by Azraqī, they may well be spurious.

The form of many, but not all, of the qaṣā'id of Azraqī follow the classical pattern. Typically the poem opens with a tashbīb or taghazzul on themes such as nature and the season of the year, wine and the beloved. It then passes by way of the gurīz-gāh into the madiḥa (the panegyric proper); it concludes with a du'ā and often a huṣn-i talab (5).

The qaṣīda is a very old verse-form probably of pre-Islamic Arab origin (6). Among the earliest extant examples of such poems in Persian are those of Rūdakī (7), which emerge into our literary experience in a fully developed form. Whereas Rūdakī's poems have taghazzul and the theme of wine, it is during the Ghaznavid period that the themes used in the tashbīb are multiplied and elaborated. As well as the separation and union of the beloved, we find descriptions of 'Id, Nawrūz, Mihrgān, wine, the horse and even the pen and sword; the theme of nature becomes especially prominent (8). Such themes continued to be important during the Saljūq period; as we shall see many of them are to be found in Azraqī.

Like content, the style of these poems becomes embellished during the age of the Ghaznavids. Poetic license and hyperbole become prominent. Exaggeration (mubālagha) becomes particularly important not only in the tashbīb, but also in the praise of the king and his qualities. Not only beauty but also ugliness might be the subject of mubālagha (9). There is also a proliferation of the

metres used (later exemplified in the 'Irāqī style) and the number of rhetorical devices, as well as radīf (10).

During the Saljūq period, most of the poets are panegyricists. To some extent there is a reaction against the complexity and artificiality of the earlier style, although the taghazzul is still important (11). In the taghazzul, lughz and chīstān predominate more than in the preceding period (12). Although it is clear that the style is rapidly becoming exhausted, there is little in the way of innovation. Only in the habsiyya of Mas'ūd do we find a poet concerned to show his own emotions. However there is some innovation on the part of two poets, both of whom owe something to their precursors (13). These two poets are Abū'l Faraj and Azraqī; the innovation of the former bore fruit, whilst that of the latter was short-lived.

Abū'l Faraj Rūnī's work impressed Anvarī who is said to have brought his style to fruition (14). Rūnī contains elements of the nascent 'Irāqī style. He has no taghazzul <sup>at times</sup> (or short ones) and his metres are of the shorter varieties. In his imagery he shows an interest in the relationship between the animate and the inanimate (15).

The especial contribution of Azraqī was in the sphere of imagery and its development which <sup>was</sup> associated with him. His imagery caused a certain amount of comment from the critics of the period and also of modern times. We shall now examine this criticism in detail.

The distinctive nature of certain images employed by Azraqī attracts the notice of the sixth century Hijra litterateur, Rashīd al Dīn Vatvāt.

In his work on poetics, Hadā'iq al Sihr, he describes tashbīh, simile, as follows: 'As the thing likened (mushabbah) has an existence ~~obtaining~~ before one's eyes, it is necessary that that unto which a thing is likened (mushabbah bi-hi) also has an existence ~~obtaining~~ before one's eyes. Certainly what is not good and acceptable is what a group of poets have done and are doing: they compare a thing to something which has neither existence in thought and imagination, nor in reality (dar a'yān). Thus they compare a flaming (char) coal to a musky sea whose waves are golden; never in reality does a musky sea exist nor golden waves. The people of this period, due to the littleness of their understanding, have been amazed and fascinated at the similies of Azraqī. In his poetry all the similies are of this type and serve no usefulness.' (16)

Vaṭvāṭ's judgement of Azraqī's use of simile is a gross generalisation. However, his view is echoed by Shams al Dīn Qays, writing in the early seventh century of the Hijra. Qays was indebted to the work of Vaṭvāṭ (17), although his attitude towards Azraqī is more tempered: 'The more perfect and best similes are those which may be reversed, i.e. the thing compared and that compared to it may be compared with one another, as the night with tresses (zulf), and tresses with the night, the horseshoe with the crescent moon and the crescent moon with the horseshoe. The most deficient of similes is that which is imaginary and cannot be imagined comparably in reality (dar khārij), as certain reckless persons have compared a fiery oven (tanūra) to a sea full of musk, and the shining fire in a black coal to a molten golden wave. Of the poets,

Azraqī is most addicted to this device; he used many good and bad similes.' (18)

Both Shams and Vaṭvāṭ lived in the centuries after Azraqī. What must be realised is that both of these writers were not judging Azraqī's work on the basis of new canons of criticism and with hindsight. What were considered to be the desiderata of simile were established before the time of Azraqī. The earliest work of literary criticism we possess is Rādūyānī's Tarjuman al Balāgha, for long attributed to Farrukhī, and which was the inspiration for Vaṭvāṭ's work (19). On the tashbīh, Rādūyānī states: 'The best type is that which when reversed is not spoiled or made deficient and where every one of the things compared stands in place of the other in form and meaning.' (20)

In view of the <sup>attitude</sup> ~~contemporary~~ views of <sup>contemporary</sup> ~~the~~ critics, the innovation of Azraqī in his imagery must be seen as revolutionary. It is for this reason that he is important. Azraqī has struck a blow for freedom from the confines of the rules of classicism.

As examples of this new type of imagery we may call the following to attention (21): pūlād 'ar'ar (1.307), sumārīhā-yi 'anbar (1.516), bīsha-yi almās (1.1241), dast-i marg (1.68) which is a post-classical usage (22), and asb-i bād (1.201) which is without precedent (23).

Rādūyānī, Vaṭvāṭ and Qays would have objected to these images because they do not exist in reality and are, in the circumstances, the produce of a powerful imagination. Such innovation in imagery by Azraqī must be seen as an attempt to escape from the confines of his

predecessors and the repetition of their images (24). If his style had been permitted to develop, Persian literature might have been very different (25). Because of the physical circumstances of his work at court, the inclination of much of his imagery is towards a demand on the power of the imagination; and its alienation from life and nature is a desire to escape from monotony; consequently it often moves into a fabulous and dream-like world. Thus we find 'forests of diamonds' and 'ships of ambergris'.

On this subject we can do no better than quote Shafī'ī-yi Kadkanī: 'This questioning and logical challenging within the confines of the palpable images of the gudamā' swallow most of his images in a kind of intricacy. From this point of view we confront living, vibrant nature less in his Dīvān. All his images are revealed from behind a curtain of a kind of art or logicity of thought and juggling (?) with words. The substance of his images are mostly taken from the poetry of the gudamā'. Except in limited instances, simple distiches have no freshness. However, the taste in composition and the power of his usage is noteworthy. For in as much as Amīr Mu'izzī and Lāmi'ī repeat without any change the imagery of the gudamā', he does not wish to repeat the images of those who have gone before. Yet he is also incapable of finding the opportunity for palpable experiences and images which have an aspect of novelty. In this respect, from the point of view of composition and composing and creating images, he limits his own poetical innovation' (25).

Shafī'ī-yi Kadkanī continues to point out how, like most of his

contemporaries, his images are usually concerned with nominal forms, whilst verbal images are less common. He also draws our attention to a type of image with which Azraqī's verse abounds and which is reckoned as a distinctive feature of his work, e.g. khīl-i s̄a'iqā ḥamla (1.37), gul-i arghavān nasab (1.291), and mīnā-nihād barg (1.258). Here we observe the relationship of the image and the aspect of similitude, which is not often found in his contemporaries; however, it is a feature of the verse of poets of the subsequent period such as Nizāmī and Ḥāfiz (27).

Two other features of Azraqī's imagery should be noted. Shafī'ī-yi Kadkanī again: 'The abstract side of his images is powerful; He sees the dagger in the brain like ignorance in the head of the ignorant and the arrow(head) in the heart like knowledge in the heart of the wise man (28), the shoots of the shrubs at dawn are drenched in pearls like the mind of the prince's panegyrist (29) .....

'In his hyperbole there is a kind of basis of simile and metaphor; or rather we should say that in most of his similes the factor of ighrāq is of great importance. In contrast to the images of the poets of the first period and even to some of the images of the poets of the first half of the fifth century, who attempted to arrange everything with regard to the same exact, natural and actual image, he tried to make everything that existed, even in similes, more expansive, more powerful and colourful .....

Kadkanī then compares an image of Azraqī's on the subject of wine with one from Rūdakī and points out that whereas Rūdakī's is

consistent with reality, that of Azraqī is far from reality; and, even with the aid of the imagination, it is impossible to approximate it to nature and reality (30).

Shafī'ī-yi Kadkanī concludes; 'Likewise a form of artifice and distance from nature and reality gave freshness to the images for the people of the time, who were infatuated with artificiality, and for those of the noble classes to whom the poems were addressed. However, the way and practice were gradually forgotten and no one followed him. From this innovation of his, the path reached deadlock .....' (31).

Writing in the Khurāsānī style, Azraqī employs a number of conventional themes which are examined in detail below. He also has at his disposal a great number of rhetorical devices; however, his use of these is not excessive (32). It should be noted that the first qasīda of the Dīvān has a chīstān in the tashbīb. There is also an iqtibās from Rūdakī (33).

As well as criticism of his tashbīh, we also find in Qays that Azraqī is admonished in certain other respects. In his third category of Khaṭāhā-yi ma'navī, where the critic is of the opinion that in some descriptions a point is reached which exceeds the bounds of absurdity and causes a deviation from the correct path of literature, he quotes the following lines of Azraqī (34):



وگر تخت سیمیان را بپی صرصر فداوند  
 کشید اندر هوا پیران بام دارد ده داور  
 تو آتشی طبع گردونی بی در زیران داری  
 که اندر دست او ابرست و اندر پای او صرصر  
 وگر خضر پیمبر را مباح آمد که بی گشتی  
 گذارد گام را بر موج در دریای بی معبر  
 تو از روداد سینه زد دریا بی بکف داری  
 که صد دریای خون دارد روان در آب و در گویر

"If, O lord, at the command of God the cold wind drew flying into the sky the throne of Sulaymān, (then) you have between your thighs a fiery-natured heavenly one (i.e. horse) in whose hands are the clouds and at whose feet is the cold wind.

If it were lawful for the prophet Khidr to place his foot on the waves of the sea without a ship where there is no crossing, (then) you in your palm have a sea of mīnā-coloured steel in which <sup>of blood</sup> are a hundred seas running with water and jewels (i.e. lustre)".

Qays also gives an example from Azraqī of what he regards as an unacceptable huṣn-i maqta', lls: 2104-6 (35):

همیشه تا نبود صد خون ترا ز سید  
 همیشه تا نبود هیچ برتر از پناه  
 بدست و طبع تو نازیده باد جام و دولت  
 بغر و نام تو نایبده باد افسر و گاه  
 باد گوی تو بی بنگ رود سال سال  
 باد دست تو بی جام داده ماه ماه

"As long as a hundred is no greater than three hundred, and five no greater than fifty may goblet and inkwell be elegant in your hand and nature, may crown and court in your charisma and name be firm, may your ear not be without the sound of the harp from year to year, and your hand not be without the wine cup from month to month".

Qays objects that the poet should be exhorting his patron to be idle and concerned with sensual pleasures; he regards the implication of sensuality when separated from the theme of the mistress to be inappropriate in this position; furthermore he censures the use of the negative in this situation.

The critic also draws our attention to a poor takhalluṣ (36) and gives an example of ilmān (37).

The outward form of the qaṣīda is fixed by its system of rhyming where every bayt has the same rhyme and the initial bayt has the rhyme of the poem also in the first misra'. The radīf is not common in the Dīvān (38). According to the classical rules controlling rhyme, it was not considered desirable to repeat (iṭā) post-positional syllables, such as plural forms and verbal endings, which are called jālī (conspicuous), in the qaṣīda, unless it was very long (39). A limited use of such rhymes has been allowed; such rhymes are called shāyigān (40); Qays gives an example from Azraqī (1.1666) where saljūgiyān is used as the rhyming word (41). Again Qays criticises Azraqī's use of iṭā-yi jālī in 1.240 and 1.257, where balā-gustar later rhymes with sukhan-gustar (42).

Of the metres employed by Azraqī the most common is mujtathth,

with over twenty examples. Both muḍāri' and ramal are each represented by half that number. Hazaḥ is used in five poems. Mutaqārib is found in poem 9 and munsariḥ in poem 53.

The poet composing qaṣā'id has the purpose not only of praising his patron, but also that of making a living by constantly being in his favour. The rapid development of the genre under the Ghaznavids brought with it artificiality, a profusion of rhetorical devices, and gross exaggeration.

It was in this atmosphere that Azraqī's novel use of imagery was doomed to failure. Indeed the poet is very much aware how the genre and the purpose of his compositions constrains him to lie and abase himself before his patron. In lls. 2040-42 he mentions how poets are inclined to lie; in poem 7(43) Azraqī speaks of placing poems before the mamdūh taken from 'his purse of lies' (1.191) and how he angrily sits at the feet of his pompous patron 'like a child of poor understanding before the schoolmaster' (1.188 and 1.189). In much of the rest of this work we shall concern ourselves in studying the extent to which he reflects his contemporary world and the extent to which his perspective on it is aberrated.

From the point of view of the patron, as well being flattered, the praise of poets was also the means whereby the name of the patron, his virtues and deeds were celebrated for all time. Azraqī mentions this point of view in 1.1924 and in the following, lls.521-2:

که دارد پای با ارکان و اختر

بقای ذکر مردم نظم عایت

مخوابه گشتن از دتر بدفت

با کاشعارین در <sup>مدحت</sup> عایت تو

"The permanency of being mentioned by people is lofty poetry, for it is established with the elements and the stars; many of my poems in praise of you will be transmitted from book to book".

From the themes which would seem to inspire the composition of his poems, one might be forgiven for thinking that Azraqī lived in a world which enjoyed perpetually the benefits of spring. Although most of his poems begin with descriptions of spring, many also are inspired by 'īd and mihrgān etc. Among other pretexts for his poems there is: poem 30 describing the king's progress to Pūshang, poem 9 describing the palace of the king, poem 11 is in thanks of a khal'at and poem 60 celebrates the birth of a son to the king. The occasion for a poem was not necessarily a happy one. The above-mentioned poem 7 asks the patron for assistance with his debts, poem 40 provides evidence of an estrangement from an unnamed patron. Similarly in poem 44 to Abū'l Ḥasan, Azraqī refers to a two-year absence from his court and seeks readmittance (1.1614-20, p.63). It is clear that Azraqī and his poetry were not always welcome wherever they went.

From this examination of Azraqī's Dīvān and his place in the contemporary genre, we shall turn to an examination of the prominent themes found in his gaṣā'id and his world as reflected in them.

DĪVĀN AND GENRE - NOTES

- 1) For the manuscripts used by Nafīsī see Introduction to his edition pp. sīzdah to pānzdah.
- 2) In Nafīsī's edition the printers have misnumbered certain lines repeating the numbering 1.1580 to 1.1620; this does not affect the text at all; to avoid possible confusion, about these lines the page number is also given.

There are also certain other inconsistencies in the edition:

- a) There is no qasīda no. 65; therefore there are 66 poems and not 67.
  - b) 1.686 is repeated in another poem as 1.738; likewise 1.1983 and 1.1994. It is not clear whether this is due to the poet, editor or printer.
- 3) Nafīsī, Introduction, p. pānzdah.
  - 4) 'Uthmān Mukhtārī, Dīvān, ed. Jalāl al Dīn Humā'ī, Tehran 1962, p.157.  
  
Humā'ī also disputes the composer of poem no.7 in Nafīsī; see Mukhtārī, p.80 and note. However the poem does mention the Sindbādnāma, so in spite of Humā'ī's objections the poem is probably by Azraqī.
  - 5) See Browne, op.cit., pp. 30-33. Rhyme and metre in Azraqī's work is discussed later.

- 6) See Maḥjūb M.J., Sabk-i Khurāsānī dar Shi'r-i Fārsī, Tehran 1345, p.146. For a contrary and sounder view see: A. Christensen, Kārnāma-yi Shāhān, trans. by Amīrkhanī and Sarkārāī, Tabriz 1350, p.39.
- 7) Maḥjūb p.148
- 8) *ibid.* p.149
- 9) *ibid.* p.150
- 10) *ibid.* p.152
- 11) *ibid.* p.563
- 12) *ibid.* p.564
- 13) *ibid.* p.568
- 14) *ibid.* p.579
- 15) *ibid.* p.576-7
- 16) Rashīd al Dīn Vatvāt, Hadā'iq al Sihr, ed. 'Abbās Iqbāl in Nafīsī's edition of Dīvān-i Rashīd al Dīn Vatvāt, Tehran 1339, p.662.
- 17) Shamsu'd Dīn Muḥammad ibn Qays ar Rāzī, Al Mu'jam fi Ma'āyiri Ash'ari'l 'Ajam, ed. Mīrzā Muḥammad and E. G. Browne, E. J. W. Gibb Mem, Series X, London 1909, pp.XlIII-XlV.
- 18) *ibid.* p.318
- 19) Vatvāt, p.621
- 20) Muḥammad b. 'Umar al Rādūyānī, Tarjumān al Balāgha, ed. Ahmed Ateş, Istanbul, 1949, p.44.
- 21) See M. R. Shafī'ī-yi Kadkanī, Suvar-i Khiyāl dar Shi'r-i Fārsī, Tehran, 1349, p.524. His account of Azraqī's imagery (pp.523-531) is the most extensive and useful.

- 22) See A. Bausani, Storia della Letteratura Persiana, Milan 1960, p.371.
- 23) Mahjūb, p.574
- 24) Kadkanī, p.524
- 25) See Bausani, p.372.
- 26) Kadkanī, p.528
- 27) *ibid.*
- 28) 1.24
- 29) 1.340
- 30) Kadkanī, pp.529-30
- 31) *ibid.* p.530
- 32) c.f. Qavāmī's ornate qaṣīda for the repertoire of rhetorical devices, in Browne, *op.cit.* pp.49-76.
- 33) Mahjūb, p.119; the line from Azraqī is 1.1750.  
Also see Mukhtārī, p.192 for an example of istiqbāl from Azraqī's husn-i matla' in poem 9.
- 34) Qays, p.287 and p.290; the lines in the Dīvān are 11.244-47; we have used those in Nafīsī, which differ in minor details from those found in the edition of Qays.
- 35) *ibid.* p.380
- 36) *ibid.* p.382
- 37) *ibid.* p.440-1
- 38) Māhtāb, āftāb and dīdam occur as radīf in the poems which are regarded as spurious; this leaves only taw as a radīf in the fragmentary poem 58. See Mahjūb, p. 154.
- 39) Qays, p.255 where such repetition is regarded as a great

error only permissible in very long qaṣā'id as in those of 130 bayts. Azraqī's longer qaṣā'id are usually about 60-65 lines; poem 12 is 67 lines, poem 46 is 72 and the longest is 34 with 80 lines.

- 40) H. Blochmann, The Prosody of the Persians, St. Leonards and Amsterdam, 1970, p.84.
- 41) Qays, p.205
- 42) *ibid.* p.255
- 43) This is the poem where the authorship is disputed, see above n.3.



- 3 -

### AZRAQĪ'S PICTURE OF THE UNIVERSE

As the title suggests, the aim is to draw Azraqī's picture of the universe as he himself sees it, to view through his own eyes the cosmos beyond the world, beyond the sublunar sphere. To achieve this the information is drawn solely from what is evident in the verses of the poet himself.

An appreciation of our poet's conception of the universe is to have a greater understanding of his verse; also, this may well lead to a greater understanding of the environment whence he sprang.

Whilst trying to learn about Azraqī's attitude to the stars, planets, and heavens above him, we must also have some awareness of the contemporary cosmological attitudes. These were very different from the views that today we accept without question; naturally his picture will be coloured in this respect. Medieval astronomy is very different from ours in its mechanics and function; as is well known <sup>the astronomers</sup> ~~they~~ believed in a geocentric universe surrounded by the spheres and also in the power of astrology (1). These basic ideas are of the type to which one would expect to find allusions in the work of a poet such as Azraqī. Indeed, we will be able to show that only by being aware of the contemporary intellectual background can the full sense be gained from certain verses. Far

too often it is possible to gain sense from a particular line or lines, but in fact there may be a far more significant meaning which only becomes apparent when one is aware of certain basic facts - not necessarily specialised nuances - current in the astronomy and astrology of the period.

We cannot claim to be expert in such sciences. However, we are fortunate in possessing Al-Bīrūnī's Kitāb al-Tafhīm, in a very accessible form in the edition and translation of R. Ramsay Wright (2). This work was written in Ghazna in 1029 A.D. as an elementary textbook for a Khwarazmian princess. As such, it is a work which may be regarded as a fair reflection of contemporary thought in this field, indeed a "primer of eleventh century science" (3). At the present time this work is our main reference for the cosmological theory of the period.

From the points made in the preceding paragraphs it is to be hoped that we can judge the extent to which Azraqī's use of cosmological images in his work is arbitrary or not. In this, whether the images he employs are conventionalised or not is not of great relevance in the discussions - what they tell us is important; from the point of view of understanding his environment, whether he believes or not what he says, is far more difficult to assess. Following on from this, one obvious reservation needs to be stressed: one must wonder how far down the intellectual scale doctrines on the universe in the eleventh century penetrated. There were no radical innovations in the system from the time of Ptolemy ( until Copernicus in Europe and presumably until modern times in the Islamic world),

Although his title of hakīm might be an indication of scientific knowledge, Azraqī was known as a poet, not a natural philosopher; as an educated man it seem reasonable to expect him to reflect traditional ideas (and possibly traditional, popular misconceptions). There is no information with regard to his education, but we would not be surprised to learn that he was familiar with the science of his age and for such knowledge to be displayed in his work. His contemporaries in the poetic art often showed themselves skilled in other respects: Anwarī was also famous as an astrologer, if not always successfully (4), and the famous scientist, Khayyām, earned latterday fame for his poetic works.

Yet whatever Azraqī tells us will be important in helping us to understand his verse, life and times, insofar as it will show what educated people thought of the heavens above in the late eleventh century.

It must be stated here that the terms of reference for my use of the words 'astronomy' and 'astrology' are based on the definitions found in the 'Shorter Oxford Dictionary': 'astronomy' is 'the science which treats of the constitution, relative positions, and motions of the heavenly bodies, including the earth. 'Astrology is of two types 'natural' and 'judicial' (also called 'genethl<sup>ic</sup>ic'); 'natural astrology' is 'the calculation and foretelling of natural phenomena, as tides and eclipses etc. '; 'judicial astrology' is 'the art of judging of the occult influences of the stars upon human affairs'.

The method employed below is as follows: an analysis of the

following aspects:- the stars (general, fixed stars mentioned by name, constellations and the signs of the Zodiac), the planets, the sun, the moon, miscellany (such as 'shooting stars'); finally we discuss the 'heavens' and the terms used etc.

### The Stars

As might be expected the use of images about the stars is very common in the poetry of Azraqī. Several different words are employed: sitāra, akhtar, najm, kawkab; the commonest word used is sitāra. There does not appear to be any distinction made between the various words used, they are synonymous. In general, their meaning is that of 'star', rather than 'heavenly body' which would include the planets etc.

Since the stars are mentioned so frequently they become very much a part of the stock-in-trade of the poet (5). Many usages are obvious ones; one expects stars to be thought of as "bright" or "shining" (e.g. l.1627 p.66). We find many usages that are descriptive, where the meaning and image are self-evident: the stars are like pearls, as in the following example:

1.32

ازان در قعر این ریزد چو بؤللو اختر روشن      وزین در صحن آن جوشد چو افتر بؤللو بیضا

"From the one into the depth of the other he pours bright stars like pearls, and from the latter into the area (sahn) of the former, white pearls boil up like stars".

The stars are also compared to raindrops (1.735), dewdrops (1.599), eyes - i.e. bright, shining (1.250), words (1.1228), flowers

(1.772 and tulips - lāla - 1.591), and they are compared to warriors as in 1.1238:

ستارگان سبجان جنگ برگردون      ای کشند بدریای خون درون اذیال

"The stars in heaven like warriors of war draw their garments into a sea of blood".

Apart from those lines, some of which are mentioned above, which are basically of a descriptive nature, one cannot fail to be impressed by the number of occasions when the stars are used in allusions connected with astronomy and astrology. Stars are strongly associated with Fortune, as in 1.257:

بخت موفی و سعد موفر      بخت موفی و سعد موفر

"By an auspicious omen and a lucky star, by satisfied Fortune and abundant happiness".

This association is also seen in several other examples such as 1s.850,394 and 215.

The most explicit and unequivocal example of this association with Fate is to be found in 1.1755:

ز نیک و بد ز قران ستارگان اثرست      سعادت تو مؤثرتر از هزار قران

"The consequence of good and bad is from the conjunction of the stars; your happiness is more influential than a thousand conjunctions".

This example also highlights the problem as to the exact meaning of 'stars'. Only the signs of the zodiac and the planets had any

effect upon the affairs of men. Therefore at the moment, the signs of the zodiac are being alluded to, if not the heavenly bodies as a whole. Nevertheless, it is evident from these examples that the motions of the stars were believed to have an important effect upon the destiny of men on earth. In a similar vein, other qualities - in this case favourable ones - are likewise regarded by Azraqī as being influenced by the stars, such as victory (1.316), generosity (1.1538, p.66), and intelligence (1.1246). This all illustrates a belief in the influence of the heavenly bodies which transcends today's 'lucky star' mentality.

It is also to be noted that the stars are anthropomorphised; they speak (1.695), sing praises (1.223). In the following example they possess intelligence ('aql'), ls.403-5:

زبان من شده از طبع من ستاره فشان	دو چشم شده اندر نلک ستاره شمر
یکی ستاره مدیح شد بزرگ عطا	دیگر ستاره روش سپهر تیز مهر
بعقل عالی در هر روان ای شرم	کزین رو نوع ستاره کدام عالی تر

"My tongue went forth from my being, scattering stars; my eyes went into heaven counting the stars, one the bright star of praise to the munificent king, the other the bright star of the swift-moving firmament; I counted in both a lofty intelligence, of these two stars which is the loftier?"

It is tempting to regard such examples as being merely 'poetic'; however, the matter may not be quite so simple, there may be a more significant and less arbitrary meaning. The understanding of the cosmos was based on the heritage of ancient thought, expounding the doctrine of the heavenly spheres. Each sphere was also credited with an intelligence; the word used for 'intelligence' was 'aql' (6).

These 'Intelligences' amongst the Arab philosophers would seem to owe their origin mainly to Aristotle who regarded motion as either intrinsic or needing an external mover. With the heavenly spheres the original source of motion was the primum movens which itself moved by 'aspiring' to the eternal unmoved activity of God. Such an aspiration required some sort of 'soul' which each sphere possessed. Herein is the origin of the Intelligences (also called 'Motors'). The movement of the outer sphere moved the one inside it and so on. (7) Is it too presumptuous to suggest that this is what our poet is alluding to here? It adds a layer of meaning which might well escape the modern reader, and also points to some sort of acquaintance with philosophical ideas on the part of Azraqī. His ideas on the matter are not wholly correct for it is the sphere itself that possesses the intelligence not the individual stars, all of which are attached to the sphere of the Fixed Stars.

Azraqī also provides us with information regarding his conception of the astronomy of the universe. That the stars move is indicated in several places (ls.22 where they revolve, 25,1188). The following example seems to suggest that the stars turn about the axis of the earth, l.551:

خدايگانی که از جان او سرف خواهد  
بناگذاری سیر ستاره در محور

"A lord through whose soul, the journeying of the stars on the axis (of the world) seek elevation happily."

The belief in the revolution of the universe about the earth is of course the basis of the geocentric theory which was accepted in Islam and Christendom until the sixteenth century; Azraqī naturally reflects this belief.

He also tells us that the stars are lofty (1.1554), whilst suggesting that they are at a finite distance as in 1.1642, p.67, where he speaks of the dāman-i sitāra. Furthermore, he regards the stars as possessing firmness (1.1636, p.67), they are eternal and unchanging, (here we find conformity with the philosophers who contrasted the sublunar sphere with the ingenerable and incorruptible heavens), 1.2088:

نه انجست و نه انجم جداست از تغییر

"Nay, he is the stars and like the stars is divorced from change ....."

The suggestion is that there is a precision and order manifest in the stars.

This feeling of order, precision and eternity effected by God revolving around the earth must have given comfort and reassurance to mortal beings. It may be that in the next example,



Azraqī is pointing out the ordered, precise three-tiered configuration of the cosmos, l.224:

چو در دریای رست تو بجنبه موج زرافشان      ستاره بادبان بایه فلک کشتی زمین نگر

"When in the sea your hand stirs the gold-scattering wave, the stars are the sails, the firmament the ship and earth the anchor."

That is to say above the earth is the firmament and the stars. The 'divine' nature of the heavens, was always contrasted by the Ancients with the wayward and corruptible nature of earth; although Azraqī nowhere makes this explicit point, he is possibly echoing the old tradition in the following, l.1196:

همیشه تا نرود بر سر دره آب      همیشه تا نبود در ستاره خوب زرنگ

"Until a well of water flows on the heavens, until there is zarang wood in the stars .....".

(I do not know why "zarang wood" should be mentioned rather than any other; possibly it is because it rhymes conveniently).

This husn-i maqta' is of course hyperbolic; to us the line is hyperbolic: we know that there cannot be wood and water amongst the stars, as Azraqī suggests; our reasons however would probably be based on considerations of the forces of gravity and dynamics involved. The exaggeration for our poet lies in another direction. It was part of the heritage of philosophical thought which taught that the heavens were composed of a material quite different from that constituting the sublunar environment; this was ether. The

world on the other hand was made up from the four elements in various combinations and because they were all heavier, they could unite under no circumstances with the stuff of which the heavens were composed (see below). This is where the Azraqī's hyperbole lies: water and wood can never be joined to the stars and heaven.

It should already be apparent that even from his usage of the stars in his qaṣā'id, Azraqī has furnished us with sufficient information to show that his outlook and conception of the universe was different from ours.

#### Fixed Stars Mentioned by Name

Most of the stars which are known by names to us, still retain the names given to them by the Arabs. Of the vast number Azraqī only concerns himself with two: Sirius and Canopus. As only the signs of the zodiac and the planets were thought to have any effect in judicial astronomy, Azraqī's use of them is wholly descriptive.

As Sirius only occurs once we shall deal with it first. In l.1626, p.66, it is used along with the Pleiades and to it is attributed the colour of coral; this, is an allusion to it being reddish, for the adjective "basadīn" is given the meaning of "redness" (Steingass). Whether Sirius is actually red or not in appearance, we are unable to say; however it is certainly bright and prominent, being in fact the brightest star in the heavens visible to an unaided observer, magnitude -1.6.

The other star Canopus is mentioned eight times and its usage is more developed and elaborate. Like Sirius it is also bright and prominent, being the second brightest star visible (mag. -0.9).

Its prominence in the heavens is shown in 1.1184, where it is described as a 'banner'; what is significant is that it is shown along with other prominent bodies such as the moon and Jupiter.

Its brightness is pointed out in 1.1630, p.64 and 1.1530. Canopus also seems to shine alone, indeed there are no stars of similar brightness close to it in the sky, 1.1632, p.64:

بارم از جرع یمن بی اوسپیل اندر فراق      راست پنداری که در جرع یمن دارم- یمن/ یمن

"I rain (tears) from the Yamanī jaz' (eyes), without her (I am) Canopus in separation; rightly you would surmise that in the Yamanī jaz' I have happiness/wealth." (8)

Canopus also has the attribute of being "coral-like" (1.1192). That this is a reference to redness would seem to be confirmed by 1.1887 in which the star is compared to the lips.

Apart from its brightness, Azraqī stresses the fact that this star is separated from others in the sky and that it has a reddish appearance. It is gratifying to find that these are the very features of the star which are mentioned by the astronomers; indeed, Ibn Qutayba, quoted in Kunitzsch's work on Arabic star nomenclature says: ' ..... ein südlicher, roter Stern ..... er steht in Horizontnähe, abgesondert von den (anderen) Sternen, und wandert nicht nach Westen zu wie andere (Sternen) sondern geht in der Breite seines Aufgangs auch wieder unter'; and in Adab al Kitāb, quoted in the same work, we find the following statement: 'ein roter Stern, abgesondert von den (anderen) Sternen; wegen seiner Horizontnähe sieht man ihn immer gleichsam zittern'. (9)

Thus the qualities of Canopus mentioned by Azraqī are vouchsafed with precision by an important astronomer. Unless such information were commonplace, we cannot but regard this as an indication of Azraqī's considerable knowledge of the universe as understood in his day and age.

Another feature of the face connected with this star is to be found in l.1884: "her broken hyacinth in musk-scattering Canopus"; (something to do with the hair may be intended).

Apart from these last-mentioned usages, at one point Azraqī does display a knowledge of astronomy (unless it is plagiarised) which is not in the least arbitrary, l.1631 p.64:

و در سهیل ای بت کسی اندر فوکی و در عقرب ندید چون کند در فوکی و در عقرب سهیل تو وطن

"If, O idol no one saw Canopus in Sagittarius and Scorpio, how would your Canopus (lips) make a home in Sagittarius (gaus-eyebrows) and Scorpio ('agrab-eyes)?"

It is the first misrā' which is particularly instructive. The poet means that the star is never seen in these constellations. Not only is this quite apparent, as a map of the stars indicates, but Canopus is in fact on exactly the other side of the sky from Sagittarius and Scorpio; a line from Canopus through the celestial pole would bisect the two constellations!

#### The Constellations

Of the many constellations recognised by the Muslims of the period, Azraqī mentions only three, if we include the Milky Way. As will be apparent from what follows, the absence of any references

to the constellations having any astrological effect may be taken as showing that the poet was aware of the fact that they played no part in that science.

The Milky Way is mentioned only on two occasions and is called majarra (ls.772 and 400). The poet remarks on its brightness and its whiteness, 'camphor-like foam' (1.400). He also says that it is composed of stars.

When the Great Bear (or the Plough, to mention one of its several other names) is referred to, the descriptions also indicate more than a mere acquaintance with the name (10). It is twice called Haft Aurang and once Banāt-i Na'sh. We are told that its stars are like flowers (1.1151). Azraqī is also aware of the high position it occupies in the sky, as is apparent from this example, 1.1173:

رکاب مرکب او بر کرانه خورشید  
زبان نیش او در دهان هفت اورنگ

"The stirrup of his horse is at the side of the sun, the tongue of his spear is in the mouth of the Bear".

And indeed, the stars of the Bear are used as pointers to show the position of the Pole Star and hence of the celestial pole, the highest point in the sky.

The following example shows an awareness not only of the number of stars in the body of the constellation but also its shape; without this knowledge the line would make little sense; 1.397:

بنات نعش تو گفتم که بشکونه هستی  
نمود صورت صاعی ز هفت دانه گوهر

"You would say the inverted Plough looked like the shape of a sād composed of seven jewels."

The 'jewels' are of course the seven stars, which if joined up form the outline of the letter sād.

By far the most commonly mentioned constellation is the Pleiades, which is usually called parvīn ; on one occasion it is referred to as 'paran' and again once it is surayyā. It is mentioned nineteen times.

The poet is aware of the brightness and closely-grouped appearance of the Pleiades (11), as is evident from 1.1591, p.65:

تا بی پروین نماید پنجم سمن سان      تا بی خورشید دارد صورت زرین سمن

"As long as the Pleiades seem a group of silvery spears and the sun has the form of a golden shield."

The Pleiades are also likened to silver spears in 1.1995.

The constellation also has affinities with flowers; in 1.1601, p.65, and 1.1873, it is with the jujube; its stars are like pomegranate seeds, as in 1.1959:

گل پروینست یا تار کفیه بر درخت

"Is that the form of the Pleiades or a burst pomegranate on the tree?"

Apart from being compared to sparks (1.211), the perfume benjamin (1.1626, p.66), pearls (1.398), the Pleiades are compared to the teeth, (1s.1633 & 4 and less clearly in 1.189, and in 1.1888).

Only one line has any hint that the Pleiades might have some astrological influence, l.1903:

نمود ایست ز آثار رای او هر وین      نشانه ایست ز اجرای قدر او سرطان

"The Pleiades are an example of the effects of his wisdom, Cancer is a sign of the aspects of his power."

Were it not for the presence of Cancer in the second misrā' we would be inclined to have felt that the Pleiades merely mean bright and shining; we cannot explain why Cancer should be associated with a king's power; al Bīrūnī attributes nothing very favourable to this sign (12).

The only other constellation which might be mentioned is Orion, but as the terms used can also mean Gemini we have included it in the next section. We shall make a point of stressing the occasions when it might mean Orion rather than Gemini.

#### The Signs of the Zodiac

In the other aspects of the heavens we have already looked at, it has been convenient to divide the discussion of the images employed into descriptive and astronomical/astrological ones. In this section we shall do likewise; however, because of the importance of the signs of the zodiac upon earthly matters we shall pay greater attention to the latter aspect.

Of the twelve signs, Azraqī mentions only five: Sagittarius, Scorpio, Pisces, Cancer and Gemini. Gemini is mentioned far more often than the others for reasons which we shall make obvious.

Sagittarius appears on two occasions; one has already been

pointed out when discussing the star Canopus (1.1631, p.64). The importance of this example lies in the fact that it shows that the poet is fully aware of the position of this sign in the heavens: it lies on the other side of the sky from Canopus, and moreover its neighbour on one side is the sign Scorpio. This knowledge is precise and unequivocal. In this line Sagittarius is called 'gaus' and the line contains a pun on 'bow' and the 'eyebrow' of the beloved.

The other reference to this sign is in line 2289:

هون کمان در دست گیری تایی سعدی شها  
تایر سعدی شها هون در قوسک دانه مشری

"When, O king, you take your bow in hand, it is a happy matter, as when Jupiter is in Sagittarius".

There are several important points to note here. Firstly there is the parallel drawn between the king and Jupiter and the parallel between Sagittarius ('gaus', the 'bow') and the king's bow. The relationship between Jupiter and kings is heavily supported by astrology, as al Bīrūnī indicates; however, we would prefer to discuss this further in the section on planets. The relationship of the king's bow to this sign is a nice play on words.

Azraqī also suggests that when Jupiter is in Sagittarius happiness reigns. Is this astrologically sound or is it nothing but an example of the poet's license in accordance with the word-play in the line? Jupiter is strongly associated with kingly virtues and happiness, <sup>as well as</sup> ~~also~~ being the greater benefic (see below); Sagittarius according to al-Bīrūnī (13) also possesses the virtues of being 'kingly, reticent, liberal.' The conjunction of these two



would be auspicious. However there is considerable simplification of the matter; the outcome would in fact be dependent on a number of other features, such as the movement of the planet and the proximity of other heavenly bodies. We would be a little harsh on Azraqī if we expected him to cram such information into a single line. Essentially what he says would appear to be quite sound. Whether he was aware of the finer nuances of the situation or is merely speaking as a layman, it is not possible to say.

The sign Scorpio is only mentioned once and this has been referred to above in connection with Canopus and ~~the~~ Sagittarius (l.1631, p.64). Here the poet's knowledge tells us that it is opposite Canopus in the sky and adjacent to Sagittarius. It is to be noted that in the second half of the line 'aqrab means 'eyes'.

Pisces likewise is mentioned once, in l.2093:

بر آسمان زبسی گز و خون ستاره موت      ز بیم تیغ بدریا در اوقات بسنه

"From the dust and blood (of battle) the stars of Pisces in heaven fell swimming into the sea through dread of the sword."

This example of hyperbole is to be regarded mainly as imaginative and descriptive. It is, of course, an impossible occurrence, but the impossibility lies in the incompatibility of the elements involved, that is the incompatibility of the aethereal nature of the stars with the nature of the water in the sea. Our objections to the phenomenon would be based on other considerations; however we must understand why such an occurrence would be regarded as impossible by Azraqī.

The sign Cancer occurs three times in the qaṣā'id; twice it

is called sarajān and once kharchang. The way in which it is used presents some problems in interpretation.

1.1726:

ز رهن سرطان جز کمری نبیند کسی حکیم طالع عالم بدین نه سرطان

"One sees in the gait of the crab only crookedness, for this the world's Astrologer places the Crab (in the heavens)."

The first half-line is a reasonable observation; in the second misrā', however why should the Astronomer (God) place Cancer in the Heavens? The 'crookedness' of the crab is also seen in the rather low morals and manners ascribed to this sign by al Bīrūnī (14). Is Azraqī therefore suggesting that the associations of the sign in the sky devolve from and are paralleled by the crab on earth? Should this be the meaning intended, it is evident that Azraqī knew the qualities (e.g. 'crookedness') that astrology linked with this sign. This line also shows how the affairs of the heavens are ordered and controlled by God.

1.1159:

ز موج دریا این ابر آسمان آید کشید رایت را روی نهی بر فرشتگ

"From the waves of the sea, the clouds which aim at the sky draw the Parvīn-like banner over the Crab."

This line is obscure. Possibly it is referring to the clouds which rise from the sea being clouds of raindrops ('Parvīn-like banner') and the Crab is the sign which is covered because that sign

particularly is associated with water and rain (15).

We shall also quote the third occasion on which this sign is mentioned, although we have already done so once when discussing the Pleiades; 1.1903:

نمونه است ز آثار رای او هر وین      نشانه است ز اجزای قدر او سرطان

"The Pleiades are an example of the effects of his wisdom, Cancer is a sign of the aspects of his power."

We have already stated our attitude to this line (see above). To regard the bright and shining Pleiades as an example of his wisdom seems acceptable. However the link between the (qadr) power of the king and the sign is not clear. Line 1726 has already referred to the 'crookedness' of the Crab and al Bīrūnī tells us that Cancer is "indolent, dumb, fickle and changeable" (16). These are hardly the qualities any panegyrist would dare associate with the object of his praise.

We may regard the poet's use and comprehension of this sign as less impressive than of others.

The words dū paykar and jauzā are used for the sign Gemini; they can also mean the constellation Orion.

This would seem to have arisen from the fact that the Arabs formerly pictured the constellations and signs of the Zodiac in a different way to the Greeks. To the Arabs Orion and Gemini together formed one constellation and were called by the same name. With the adoption of the Greek terms, the constellation was split, although the names still referred to either part (17).

In Azraqī's verse there are occasions when Orion would seem to fit the context better. We have included them in the discussion here, although strictly speaking they should have come in the section on the constellations. We shall discuss them first.

In 1.1633-4, p.64; jauzā is compared to the waist of the beloved. It is the analogy with waist that leads us to suspect that Orion is indicated, for one of the main features of this constellation is that it has a belt on the figure of the hunter, Orion, composed of three bright, prominent stars. Likewise in 1.1887-8 there are also allusions to jauzā as a waist; here is also suggested that it is like a shooting-star, i.e. thin and narrow. In the following example either Orion or Gemini might be intended, 1.567:

بین سه میخ بنعلی در ار نهیدستی  
بروی ماه نو اندر نشانده دو سیکر

دفعه اول

"If you have not seen <sup>on the face of the new moon</sup> ~~the mark of~~ dū paykar, look at the three nails in his horseshoe."

The three nails referred to allude to the stars of dū paykar; however, neither Orion or Gemini have shapes which resemble very much the shape of a horseshoe. Either might be meant. It is also to be noted that none of these examples have any astrological allusions, further suggesting Orion rather than the Zodiac sign.

The astrological features of Gemini (Orion, of course, has no influence in this sphere) are shown in 1.413:

وزان سبب که سیکر برزد سجده و را  
برنگد با شیم اندر فلک زدو سیکر

"Because in form they (Gemini, the Twins) prostrate before him (the king), we <sup>Jupiter,</sup> (the sun and moon) are envious of Gemini in the heavens."

There are several points to note from this example. Gemini, Jupiter sun and moon are all engaged in praising the king; as a sign of the zodiac, Gemini is the one which would seem to be most closely linked with kingship and good virtues (18). The sign is also higher than the other ~~the~~ bodies; in fact it was believed to be fixed on the sphere of the fixed stars, the eighth heaven.

Intimations of kingship are also apparent from the following, l.146:

فوغ دلی تو از نور جرم خورشید است      خیال هست تو تاج سارک جواز است

"The brightness of your wisdom is from the light of the globe/ form of the sun, the thought of your ambition is the crown of the helm of Gemini."

The link with kingly virtues is clear from this line. There is also significance in it being used with the sun; the associations of the sun are discussed in detail below, but it should be realised that the sun reaches its highest point in the sky when in the house of Gemini.

L.211 also hints at the majesty associated with this sign and here it is also employed with a royal falcon, the shāhīn,

The height of Gemini in the sky is also stressed in l.279 and in this line, l.25:

الایا پایه تختت فرود یسیر مایی      ای گوشت ساجت نواز گردگی جوزا

"Indeed the foot of your throne is below the form of the fish, indeed the corner of your crown is above the revolution of Gemini."

Here the height of Gemini, on the highest sphere ( and also it is the sign where the sun (king) reaches its zenith in the sky) is contrasted with the lowness of the Fish upon which the earth was thought to be resting (19) (see below).

#### The Planets

In this section we find the planets Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Azraqī does not mention Mercury. Although the sun and moon were regarded as being among the 'wandering stars' they are treated separately, in the subsequent sections.

Venus is mentioned on four occasions and is always called zahra. It is noticeable that on all occasions except one, the planet is associated with happiness and joy (20) as in 1.2076:

ملک زهره و ماهت نعت آن دلخواه      که با سعادت زهره است و با طراوت ماه

"Are not Venus and the moon epithets for that beloved who has the happiness of Venus and the freshness of the moon?"

Other lines speak of Venus as being associated with sa'adat (1.2076) and ramish (1.905). This aspect of Venus is not to be wondered at for the planet was regarded as the lesser benefic (sa'd-i asghar) among contemporary astrologers. Presumably only the greater benefic, Jupiter, could prove more auspicious.

Apart from happiness in general, Azraqī also associates the planet with joy, cheerfulness and music, as in 1.905:

مطرب از رامش دهن زهره نباید برداشت      ساقی از گردشی دهن رستم نشاید بی کمر

"The minstrel, like Venus, must not cease joyful singing; the sāqī, like an eye, ought not to be idle from going around."

Such an association is not to be regarded as casual or an aspect of the poetic imagination; rather it is sound astrology. Speaking of the trades, professions etc. with which Venus is associated, al Bīrūnī tells us that they are: "..... accompanying singing, composing songs, playing the lute ..." (21), and on its activities, instincts and morals, he says they are: ".....jesting, dancing..... takes pleasure in every thing.....fond.....of song..." (22).

The nature of Venus as revealed by Azraqī seems to have changed little from that of the Venus/Aphrodite of the Classical world. Indeed the other planets will be seen to have retained much of the original characteristics which they possessed in the pagan past.

In 1.534 the planet is described as bright or white:

ایا قمر خدایی که نور خدشرا      ای سجد برد نور زهره انیر

"O moon which ploughs monthly, <sup>of</sup> whose <sup>light</sup> ~~know~~ the light of bright/white Venus prostrates itself (?)"

This observation could have been made with the naked eye and it is one which al Bīrūnī confirms: "pure white tending to straw colour, shining, according to some greenish." (23)

One should also note that the planet is usually mentioned in the company of the moon. We are inclined to regard this association as essentially 'poetic'. However al Bīrūnī does tell us that the "moon asks friendship from Venus" (24); it does not seem to be the case vice versa; rather the brilliancy and moist nature of the moon are mentioned (25). The lascivious nature of Venus plus the romantic features of the moon (i.e. as in the face of the beloved) would seem to complement one another.

The planet Mars occurs twice, being called mirrīkh. One's attention is drawn in these instances to the similarities between our conception of Mars and that of the poet (26). It appears very much in the guise of the God of War, as this example illustrates; 1.2033:

از گرد جنگ دیده غورسید با غبار      وز زخم کوسى تارک مریخ با نغان

"The sun's eye (filled with) dust from the dust of battle, the helmet or Mars is (filled with) with lamentation from the beating of the war-drums."

Mars also appears in a martial context in 1.451. In what he calls "Indications as to religious pictures of the planets", al Bīrūnī says of Mars that he has "...helmet on head..." (27); one should also note that Azraqī tells us that Mars shouts out (1.451) and laments.

Jupiter is the planet which is mentioned most often by Azraqī; it is mentioned on fourteen occasions and is always called mushtarī (28).



One obvious attribute which the poet describes, is its brightness, e.g. 1.1593-6, p.65, and 1.2231. It is also pearly (1.29) and like wine (1.1795). The planet is also mentioned in the company of other prominent and important heavenly bodies such as the sun and moon (e.g. 1.407). It is also used as a conventionalised image as in the following,

1.756:

از دست دهری که بود سوی و روی او      بر مستی بنفشه و بر ماه لادزار

"From the hand of the beloved whose form (?) and face is a violet upon Jupiter and a tulip-bed upon the moon, take the wine."

Jupiter here means the forehead (29) about which are violets (i.e. the hair); the tulip-bed is the cheeks of the face (i.e. the moon).

The most interesting and impressive uses of Jupiter are related to its importance in the realm of astrology. It is frequently stated to be of great importance over the happiness of the world, e.g. 1.870 and 1.1254; its influence is most clearly stated in 1s.1314-5:

مستی را که به سعد مهن است بدوست      هم تغیر رسد از جرم سپهر و اشکل  
گاه منخوسى بنوعمرم وی از نخس و بال      گاه مسعود بود ذات وی از سعد شرف

"Jupiter, upon whom the happiness of the world is bound, changes shape through the globe/form of the heavens; at times his essence from ~~humble~~ <sup>of honour</sup> felicity was made happy, at times his form was wretched from an unwholesome sinister aspect."

It may be seen from these lines that both bad and good fortune were influenced by the planet.

The planet is also associated with farhang <sup>(excellence)</sup> (1.1184), goodness (1.1593-6) and other virtuous characteristics. Jupiter's strength in these virtues stems from the fact that it is the greater benefic. Al Bīrūnī conveniently lists these virtues for us (30); ~~not least~~ <sup>especially</sup> to be noticed is that Jupiter is very much linked with kingship. It might justly be said that Jupiter in his Islamic milieu has retained much of the quality of the pagan Jove, although he is completely shorn of any vestiges of paganism.

In the following line we find him in a martial context,

1.2247:

روز بزم از مهر او نور فواید آفتاب      روز رزم از بازوی او سه جویه مصری

"On the feast day the sun seeks light from his face, on the day of battle Jupiter seeks felicity from his arm."

At first sight this seems contrary to his attribute as the peacemaker; one might quite rightly have expected Mars here. Possibly the 'felicity' mentioned is victory.

We are also given a certain amount of astronomical information. In lines 1593-6 we learn that Jupiter is fixed in the globe (jirm) of heaven, and in the following is said to have its 'own' heaven,

1.870:

اندرون خلعت و خنجره و شرف سرا      مستی کرد سعود از فلک خویشی نثار

"In this happy, ennobling robe of honour, Jupiter made auspicious offerings from its own heaven for you."

'Its own Heaven' refers to the particular sphere on which Jupiter was believed fixed. In 1.1315 we have reference to the essence/substance (dhāt) of the planet; this word can also mean soul; this was part of the vocabulary of the philosophers, very much as 'aql was (see above). Whether the poet is using it in this light is difficult to say.

Finally we come to Saturn. It is twice called kayvān and once zuhal. In 1.399 it is described as being amber-coloured at dawn, but the aspect which most interests Azraqī, is its height, as in 1.1918:

نه دیر تا به شاه سازد از پی تو      سرای برده ز خورشید و نوبت از کیوان

"It will not be long before the king through your path/guidance makes a palace from the sun and a state-tent from Saturn."

The importance of Saturn's height lies in the fact that it is in the seventh heaven, being the outermost of the planets. Thus the image above is most appropriate. There are no astrological references to Saturn.

There are also two occasions when planets are mentioned without being named. In 1.2325, Azraqī merely compares a parī to the "beauty of the morning star". The other instance is a problematic

one; 1.1317:

ماه بر جدم پخت اختر سیاره سهت      نیت رای حکما را بجز این روی اقوال

"The moon is king over all the seven wandering stars, the opinion of wise men has no agreement except in this respect."

The 'seven wandering stars' are the planets Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the sun and the moon itself. We have nowhere found any suggestion that the moon is to be regarded as lord over them, let alone it being a point of agreement among wise men. In view of the way in which we have seen that Azraqī usually uses his astrological images in a precise, accurate way, this is somewhat surprising. The line expresses his opinion in no uncertain manner; it suggests common knowledge, a popularly-held view.

#### The Sun

The sun is mentioned very frequently in Azraqī's qaṣā'id (31); it occurs on more than fifty occasions. The vocabulary he uses is also varied; he uses: khurshīd, āftāb, mihr, shams, tīgh-i hindī, chashma-yi khūr, chashma-yi khurshīd, and also phrases such as 'the star of day' and 'the golden shield'. As one of his principle patrons, Ṭughānshāh, is also 'shams al-dawla', the poet loses no opportunity in punning.

The sun is most commonly used as an image of brightness, warmth and the like; it is also used abstractly in unison with regal qualities. Its brightness is alluded to in lines such as 1.1219, 953, and as here, 1.1214:

ز نور قبه زرين آينه تمثال

"From the light of the mirror-like sun..."

We also find it suggested that the sun is connected with and indeed the cause of ruby as in 1.1221 and this line 1.464:

اگر خورشيد بودی دست رادش / سدی گرم زمین طاقت اصر

"If the sun were his munificent hand the form of the earth would become red ruby."

We know that other heavenly bodies were believed to have an influence on precious stones. In fact, the star Canopus was thought to be responsible for imparting the redness to the ruby (32); it would appear from these lines in Azraqī's verse, that the sun is given the attribute of generating ruby (see below).

The sun is also connected with flowers, 1591:

شکر انجم نهاد لاله بنایه ز سبزه / رایت خورشید بیکر گل برون آرد ز خار

"The star-like army of the tulips appears from the stones, the sun-like banner brings forth the form of flowers from the thorns."

This line clearly indicates the power of the sun, whose warmth causes the flowers and other plants to grow.

As pointed out above, the sun is connected with the king and kingly, noble attributes; this is its most common usage in the work

of our poet. We find it associated in the king with happiness, for example 1.1286:

وگر بخدمت آن سده آفتاب آیین      بکام دل رسم و رسته گزدم از احوال

"If (I am) in the service of that sun-like dignitary, I am happy at heart and free from fear."

This sentiment is also expressed on other occasions, as 1.722.

Another regal attribute which we find frequently mentioned is munificence, as in 1.362, 1.1223 and as here, 1.728:

ای آفتاب بخشش و شادی بروز بزم      وی آسمان هست و رانی بروز بار

"O sun of munificence and happiness on the feast day; he is the heaven of ambition and liberality on the day of audience."

In 1.431 the king is called "the sun of virtue (hunar)"; in the following Fortune has endowed the king with the glory (far) of the sun, 1.952:

طبع فردوسی درو دیده ضمیر رضوان      فرخنده بدو داده سپهر دوار

"The heart of Ridwan has seen in him the nature of paradise, the turning heavens have given him the glory of the sun."

The sun is also linked with the king's ambition (himmat) as is seen in 1.610 and 1.1633, p.67.

The association of the sun with these various regal qualities probably has a very long history. As the sun gives heat, light and wealth to the earth, it is not unnatural that kings should be com-

pared to it by their loyal subjects. Yet we must also note that al Bīrūnī (33) associates with the sun many of the virtues a king would be eager to possess, such as: power and victory, a good name for helping others, longing for power and government; it is associated with the following classes: kings, nobles, chiefs, generals, officials ... The link between kings and these virtues which we find in Azraqī must make us wonder whether he is giving voice to an old and well-established tradition or whether he is aware of the astrological facets attributed to the sun. The answer is probably a mixture of the two.

A feature of Azraqī's usage of the sun which should be noted is the way in which we find the sun personified. It 'sends stars upon the earth' (1.214), there are 'words from the sun' (1.1441), the sun's 'head is full of woe' (1.1619, p.66) and it is the 'sun of imagination' (1.1279).

Little is added to our astronomical knowledge in respect of the sun. We have already mentioned the use of the sun with the sign Gemini and that its significance lies in the fact that the sun reaches its highest point on the eliptic when it is in this sign. We learn little else except that the sun moves in the orbit of the heavens as this line shows, 1.736:

از جنبه سهر خدمت فرو نشست      بر گوشه کلاه تو      خورشید خند در

"Several times the sun from the orbit of the heavens, set itself upon the corner of your crown in service."

The other occasions when the poet mentions the sun are on the

whole merely descriptive and add nothing further.

### The Moon

The moon is almost as common as the sun. It is usually called māh; qamar, badr and hilāl also occur. Its uses are mainly related to standardised images and descriptions, although we do find it used with astronomical and astrological associations.

A common image using the moon in Azraqī (34) is where the moon is compared with the horseshoe of the king's steed; e.g. l.1863:

آفرین بر مرکبی که ماه بیکر نعل او      بزم خاک اندر سپهر نیلگون گیرد و کان

"Praises upon the horse through whose moon-shaped shoes, a body of earth takes its place in the blue sky."

This line also contains a point in that the exaggeration involved, as pointed out in similar examples above, stems from the incompatibility of the heavens with earth.

Azraqī also employs the conventionalised image of the moon as the face of the beloved as in l.756, l.1633, p.64 and also in conjunction with the cypress as the body of the beloved, e.g. l.1622, p.64, l.1581 and l.832, as below:

آفتاب عدسی و لعلش      که بسی سرو روان ماه تمام آرد بر

"When I saw her long stature and face, I said ~~how~~ does the walking cypress have the full moon as its fruit?"

In this context we also find it used with pearls (l.1449) where the face as the full moon is stressed, with a body like



Jonah's whale (1.1445), and we also have instances where it is used with other important heavenly bodies, such as Jupiter (1.1593-6) and Venus (1.196).

The other aspect of the moon which the poet emphasises most heavily is the brightness and silvery nature of the body; e.g. 1.271, 1.574 and 1.196.

We find the moon connected with flowers as in 1.1581 and 1.1536:

یار نقی سهر حال او دارد      شبی ز خوشه سنبل صحرای برگ سمن

"Spring has the picture of the heaven of her beauty, a night from the clusters of hyacinth, a moon from jasmine petals."

Indeed jasmine petals are white.

The moon is also musky as in 1.1537 and we see this connection as well in 1.1532:

گهی ز تافته شکسته ماه را زنجیر

"Sometimes the moon has chains of bladders of musk..."

This might refer to the halo of ice particles which sometimes appears to surround the moon. However, it is far more likely that Azraqī is using a standard metaphor where the halo about the moon is compared to the newly grown facial hair of a youth, as is stated in Huart's translation of Anis-i 'Ushshag, "Les poètes du Khorasan ont comparé le cercle formé par le duvet au halo de la lune" (35)

There are other miscellaneous uses of the moon but most of them add nothing for our present purpose; 1.1236, however, should be noted, for it suggests that the moon might be here employed as

a heraldic device along with the leopard and lion.

Astronomical information concerning the moon is not copious, but 1.1318 does seem to suggest an explanation for the phases of the moon:

گاه بر فوق است باشد و گاه تحت زمین  
که بود بدر در نشان و گاهی چفته ببل

"At times it is at the top of the heavens at times beneath the earth, sometimes the shining full moon and at times the curved new moon."

It also points out the movement of the moon; however this information can hardly be regarded as precise. We are also told that the moon moves faster than the other heavenly bodies, 1.564:

قمر زاسب تو آموخت سیر و زین محلی  
سریع تر بود از هر ستاره سیر قمر

"The moon learnt its motion from your horse; hence the movement of the moon is faster than every star."

Although this is of course correct it can hardly be said to reveal any deep scientific insight.

Likewise it is a little disappointing to find that Azraqī has so little to tell us about his understanding of the part the moon plays in the astrology of his age. The moon would appear to be moist (tarāvat), as in 1.1581; this attribution is found to be not an expression of the poetic imagination, for one of the elementary qualities of the moon is moistness (36).

In 1.362 we find the moon compared to happiness. From the point

of view of al Bīrūnī, this association seems to be very much a simplification as he regards the moon as being both beneficent and at times maleficent (37).

We have already discussed the problems presented by 1.1317, where the moon is described as being king over all the wandering stars.

### Miscellany

In this section we shall be discussing a few items connected with the universe, as found in the Dīvān, which are not readily accommodated in any of the other sections.

On one occasion Azraqī mentions the astrolabe and zīj tables, 1.75:

اگر ملک کند از زکی ندید آیه  
همی ملک از خط زج و اسطرلاب

"Heaven causes an influence, otherwise how does the whole of heaven become apparent from the zīj tables and the astrolabe?"

Azraqī shows here that he understands the use of the astrolabe and the zīj tables in making predictions etc. It is also an indication of the order and regularity manifest in the motions of the heavens.

On three occasions Azraqī also speaks of the Fish, twice calling it māhi and once samak. We have already quoted an example when discussing Gemini. This Fish was believed to support the world on its back and Steingass says this was a Hindu concept; unfortunately we can find no corroboration for this opinion even in a work such as al Bīrūnī's 'India'. What is clear is that the iconographical

uses of the Fish and its various significations is a broad and complex matter. It is not to be thought of as only of Indian origin, but may also have Chinese and possibly Buddhist connections.

That aspect of it representing a cosmic figure in the aquatic abyss is clearly established (38). There seems little doubt that the poet regards it as supporting the earth or at least being at the lowest point, for it is always used in apposition to the height of heaven or Gemini; a further example is found in l.1246:

سود در روشی مرغ هون که فروزی زمین ببارد جانی فرو برد اسفند

"If the stars in the motions of the heavens should make him intelligent, the earth would bear down his affairs to the head of the Fish."

It is not possible from the evidence presented in the *Dīvān* - and indeed idle speculation - to decide whether the Fish used in this way is part of the poet's metaphorical repertoire or whether its existence was as real and concrete to him as the ground and plants about him. ~~Suffice it to say that~~ This image is an intruder into the picture of the universe that the cosmology that was inherited from the Hellenic world. It would appear to be the only image which Azraqī does not draw from the accepted scientific facts of his age. As such it may be regarded as a deviation. However, rather than dismiss it, for our purpose, as a 'poetic' image, we should bear in mind that it may well have formed part of a body of popular belief and knowledge with which we are little acquainted.

Shihāb - 'shooting star' - is mentioned on several occasions.

In 1.75 it alludes to a lagab of the mandūh, and as being majestic and grand it is obviously to be desired. It is usually used, however, where it is compared to the king's arrow. This occurs in three instances, e.g. 1.44:

فرو سنبی دل دشمن بدان سیر سحاب آیین      بدان صد فکر بدان تیغ ملک مان

"You pierce the heart of the enemy with that meteor-like arrow, you tear open the army's ranks with that heaven-like sword."

Finally we find the shooting star used in 1.1887-8, where it is compared to the waist of the beloved. This alludes to its thin, narrow appearance.

From his use of this word we learn nothing about its place in the astronomy of the period.

#### The Heavens

The occasions when the heavens in general are mentioned in the qaṣā'id of our poet are almost without number (39). The words he uses most commonly for heaven are charkh, sipihr, gardūn, gunbad, falak and āsmān. These terms are effectively synonyms, however it is important to realise that the meanings of these words are an important indication of the way in which the sky was conceived. Thus Steingass informs us that charkh means 'celestial globe, heavenly sphere, everything revolving in an orbit'; sipihr means 'heaven, sky, sphere, celestial globe', gardūn means 'wheel, heaven, celestial globe, celestial sphere', gunbad means 'dome, heaven', falak means 'swelling, becoming round as breasts, heaven, sky, firmament', āsmān means 'heaven, celestial orb'. The general meaning of all these words can be seen

to be that of heaven conceived of as a sphere or wheel; we shall say more about this below. A convention has been suggested for the translation of these words (40), and it seems sensible to follow it. Thus we shall henceforth translate the various words for heaven as follows: charkh as celestial/heavenly wheel, sipihr as celestial/heavenly vault, gardūn as celestial/heavenly sphere, gunbad as celestial/heavenly dome, falak as firmament. Furthermore, it might be convenient to translate āsman as heaven.

In analysing the conception of the heavens, we have found it convenient to treat the sky in sections according to the particular word used. As stated above, the various words used may be regarded as synonymous, thus much of the information deduced will be duplicated, although we shall attempt to keep this to a minimum.

#### Gunbad

Gunbad only occurs on three occasions, but it is important for it is uncompromising in demonstrating the concept of the heavens as a dome. In 1.207 and 1.254, it is called gunbad-i gardūn, the 'dome of the celestial sphere'. On the other occasion it is called gunbad-i khaḡrā, where khaḡrā means not green but heaven (1.1). Regarding heaven as being in the form of a dome reflects the contemporary conception of the universe as being formed of spheres; this also makes the sky finite in form.

#### Gardūn

Gardūn is a common word in the qaṣā'id of Azraqī, occurring in about thirty instances. Often it tells us very little; it is merely used descriptively, e.g. 'the stars in the celestial sphere' (1.1238).

It is used in this way with other important objects in the heavens such as the sun and moon. We also find it frequently employed in apposition to the earth, e.g. 1.220.

We also find that gardūn is not limited to referring to the night sky or being dark and gloomy. In 1.214, it is nūrānī, 'bright', through the presence of the sun.

The part played by the celestial sphere in the fortunes of the world is not stated explicitly by the poet, although it is very commonly associated with fate. Azraqī, as will be seen below, links the heavens with fortune; he does not seem to do it very clearly when using gardūn.

Astronomical information concerning the celestial sphere is forthcoming. One of the main points which emerges is that it possesses an orbit-chanbar-as in 1.239, along which the celestial sphere moves; that the celestial sphere moves is seen for example in 1.256:

آن چنان خدایند / اندر گردش گردون

"Stay, O lord, a while, for in the revolution of the celestial sphere...."

That it is finite is suggested by 1.1182, where it has an edge (kināra) and 1.3, where it has a corner (gūsha). We have already seen that it is dome-shaped from 1.254, where we have the gunbad-i gardūn. In 1.230, an interesting point is made:

زمین از زخم گرز تو می خواجه که بگریزد  
و لیکن راه او بسته ازین گردون پنهانور

"The earth wishes to flee from the blow of your mace, but its way from this spacious celestial sphere is barred."

We would suggest that the earth is barred because the poet regards it as being immovably fixed in the heavens, in accordance with the geocentric theory of the universe.

We also find the suggestion that the elementary qualities of heaven and earth prevent them from ever coming together, as in the following hyperbolic husn-i maqta'; 1.254:

ای تا گنبد گردون نگیرد با زمین رستی  
هی تا چشم خورشید سر بر دارد از ظهور

"Until the dome of the celestial sphere is as low as the earth, until the sun rises in the west..."

Apart from the incompatibility of their elements we also have the suggestion just referred to in 1.230 that the earth is immovably fixed in the sky. The point made in the line lastly quoted is also expressed less specifically in 1.9.

A clear statement of the elementary difference between the heavens and the earth is seen in 1.634-5:

گر بود خاک گران را از سبک طبع تو بهر  
در بود چرخ سبک را از گران هم تو بار  
ناید خاک گران را این پیرانه سبک  
هرم گردون سبک را آن نگیرد استوار

a part of

"If the heavy earth ~~in~~ had your light nature and if the light celestial wheel had the weight of your hilm, the latter would make

(sedateness)



the essence of the heavy earth fly lightly, the former would not consider the globe of the light celestial sphere to be firm."

This demonstration of the heaviness of the earth and the lightness of the heavens can explain these lines only in terms of the contemporary scientific views, which held that the lightest materials (the stuff of which the heavens were composed) aspired upwards whilst the heavy materials, such as earth, fell back towards the centre of our planet.

### Charkh

The celestial wheel - charkh - is used about as frequently as gardūn and the obvious usages of gardūn are likewise found in the employment of charkh, so we shall refrain from pointing them out again.

We find further astrological references in the use of the celestial wheel. The part it plays in the destiny of the world is seen for example in 1.1754 and in 1.1311, as below:

وگر از حادثه درخ شوی رنج به دل

"If though an accident of the celestial wheel you should be aggrieved..."

It is associated with power (e.g. 1.1344); liberality and munificence (e.g. 1.781) and ambition-himmat-as in 1.79. All these characteristics may be thought of as forming part of Fortune.

In the field of astronomy we find similar information as was found for gardūn. The celestial wheel revolves in an orbit, e.g. 1.6 and as in the following, 1.274:

بر افراز او چرخ گردان      سر پاسبان را بسایه چرخ

"Above it the turning celestial wheel rubs the head of the sentinel with its orbit."

The charkh-i chanbarī, or chanbar-i charkh as it is here, meaning the orbiting celestial wheel, is a common phrase expressing the concept of the heavens turning in a circular motion. This line also indirectly suggests the height of the sky and this is also mentioned in 1.21 and 1.1179 and possibly implies that the sky is finite.

1.632 is as follows:

خاک ناساید چو چرخ از خاک را گویا بر      چرخ نشسته چو خاک از چرخ را گویا بر

"If you say to the earth: go, it does not rest like the celestial wheel; if you say to the celestial wheel: stay (hold), it does not hurry like the earth."

Two points emerge from this line. Firstly it suggests that the heavens are at rest. If we assume that the poet is speaking about the sphere of the fixed stars of any other celestial sphere, then this is plainly untrue, for it was believed that they revolved about the earth; secondly it suggests that the earth hurries along, and this too is an anathema to the geocentric theory, the earth was the fixed central point of the universe. This line is meant to be a hyperbole, which is exaggerating the power of the king over all things. The opposite of what is stated, is in fact the truth, as it was understood; Azraqī cannot be suggesting that the earth moves.

The line is an example of a poetic device; the true situation is that the heavens are moving and the earth is at rest. Thus our poet is not anticipating Copernicus.

The light elemental nature of the heavens compared with the heavy nature of the earth occurred in the example quoted above in the section on gardūn. Charkh also was used in that quotation.

### Sipihr

Sipihr which we are translating as celestial vault occurs frequently. Its use and the information that it provides us with do not differ from that which we have already seen in the foregoing sections.

Thus we find references to its brightness as in 1.404 and 1.1215. In the following it is blue (presumably like bruises) 1.37:

زمین در نعلان ارقی سپهر از زلفان زرقا

"...the earth becomes multi-coloured through their (the army's) horseshoes, the celestial vault blue through their blows."

It is not surprising to find the celestial vault connected with fortune (e.g.s. 1.952, 1.1314-5). Other desirable qualities are similarly attributed to it.

Nothing new either is contributed to our knowledge of astronomy. We find the celestial vault turning in its orbit (1.952) and in this line, the orbit of the celestial vault supports the course of the sun, 1.736:

از سپهر سپهر خدمت فوشت  
بر گوشه کلاه تو خورشید هفت بار

"Several times the sun from the orbit of the celestial vault set itself upon the corner of your crown in service."

That the celestial vault is shaped like a parasol is seen in 1.215.

The following line is further evidence to show the difference between the elemental characteristics of the sky in apposition to that of the earth, which has already been pointed out more than once above; 1.821:

همیشه مانسود خاک چون سپهر لطیف  
همیشه سائند کوه چون ستاره سار

"Always until the earth becomes light like the celestial vault, always until the mountains revolve like the stars."

The incompatibility of the elements is again mentioned hyperbolically in 1.1196.

#### Āsmān

The information which has been culled from the previous sections on the heavens is for the most part found again upon examining āsmān. We find heaven described as bright (e.g. 1.1602, p.63) and pitch black as well (1.591).

We have the usual associations with fortune (e.g. 1.415), power (1.1602, p.63) and liberality and ambition (1.728).

That the heavens are lofty is shown in 1.35, and its movement is alluded to in 1.1188. The globe (jirm) of heaven is mentioned in 1.1593, p.65. There is also an example in 1.677-8 pointing out the incompatibility of heaven and earth in a hyperbole.

### Falak

Finally we come to falak, the firmament. This is the word most commonly used for heaven. Again we do not learn much that is new.

The turning firmament is referred to in, for example, 1.1242 and in this line, 1.1608, p.66:

ز آسب چنبر فلک اندر فراز او      بر کنگره قصیده رود مرد پاسبان

"The watchman on the battlements goes along bent through colliding with the turning firmament above him."

Thus the firmament is also finite.

The firmament is curved (1.1376) yet vast (1.1172); it also possesses a centre 'indispensibly perfect', an important point, as shown in 1.964:

تا مدارست فلک را      بکامی ناچار

Order and precision is manifest through the astronomer of the firmament (1.612); and an ordered three-tiered configuration might be alluded to in 1.224 (see above).

The large part played by the firmament in fortune is amply stressed, for example 1.674:

گرز تو بند نایب بگشاید از فلک

"Your mace conquers from the firmament the bonds of misfortune..."

Munificence (1.233), power (1.1548), and sufficiency (1.1748) are all influenced by the firmament.

There are occasions when the firmament is personified as:  
'were to compound a picture' (1.627), or have its heart 'full of  
lamentation' (1.1619, p.66).

### Conclusion

At the beginning, it was stated that among our aims was to decide whether Azraqī's use of astrological and astronomical images was arbitrary or otherwise. We can now answer this question with certainty. Another aim was to learn about Azraqī's concept of the heavens above him and the part it played in his existence.

It is somewhat disappointing, though not unexpected, to find one usage of the images in question to be of little assistance in our investigation. We are referring to those conventionalised poetic images, such as the moon as the face of the beloved or the waist as thin and slender as a shooting-star. These do not really add to our knowledge and understanding of how the universe was conceived. They are descriptive similes and metaphors, comparisons of appearance born in the poets' imagination.

Fortunately there is sufficient astrological and astronomical information to help us build a picture of the universe through our poet's eyes. When making astrological allusions in his work, Azraqī sets down very few inexplicable statements. What he tells us is not equivocal or arbitrary. That he is fully aware of the part taken by the stars of the zodiac signs and the planets is corroborated by the evidence provided by his near contemporary, al Bīrūnī. That he is in line with the theory is clearly demonstrated, in those sections especially, which deal with the planets; the best example of this among the signs of the zodiac may be seen in his use of Gemini. He uses fixed and exact attributes correctly; his orderliness in this is as tidy as the science itself, wherein the

unavoidable, grinding, celestial wheels of fate were never far from man's imagination. The abundant use of astrological references in the qasā'id bear witness to this fact. One is always reminded of the immanence of fortune and man's submission before it. The poet often suggests that his mamdūh is favoured by it; perhaps the closest we come to a personal view is seen in the surprisingly frank poem where we find these lines; l.183-4:

یک نیم عمر خوشی بیهودگی ببار  
 داریم و ساعتی نسیم از زمانه باد  
 از گشت آسمانی و تقدیر ایزدی  
 بر کس چنین نباشد و بر کس چنین ببار

"We cast one half of our life vainly to the wind and were never made happy for an hour by fortune. By the turning heavens and the Divine decree let such be on no man and on no man may it be."

May we say here that we have a sentiment that most of his contemporaries would agree with; and yet, because of the knowledge of the Astronomer presiding over the universe they consign themselves willingly to His mercy?

What else have we learnt of Azraqī's universe? His poetry and thus he himself, reflect consistently the medieval picture of the cosmos. The only exception is the intrusive conception of the Fish, which has no place in the system and may for our purposes be regarded mainly as poetic convention. His universe is geocentric, it revolves around the earth at its centre. The planets and the



fixed stars have their respective spheres where they turn in their orbits, describing circular paths. We have been told that the stars above are eternal, divorced from change and are situated at a finite distance.

The very words used for heaven suggest a concept quite different from ours. The heaven is a wheel, a dome, a vault or a sphere. To us the universe is totally different. Its size is incomprehensible and the distances involved beyond the experience and understanding of <sup>any</sup> ~~any~~ human being; the stars are not all fixed on a sphere at a relatively short distance from the planets, rather they stand at vastly differing points extending to infinity. Our science has smashed through the spheres. But what of Azraqī and his contemporaries? What might the effect of their universe-picture have had upon their minds and imaginations?

The heavens to him display an order and precision imparted by God. The whole image is one which is aesthetically pleasing; it is neat and tidy with everything in its place. Its circular motion was also regarded as the perfect motion. It is a system which oozes logic. It is a confident, neatly wrapped-up system which, being complete, excites no curiosity or urge to investigate in the beholder. The earth and mankind are wrapped up in the heavenly spheres like the skins around an onion. Because the stars are at a fixed distance and the planets, in his poetic imagination, are often given human attributes, <sup>the heavens</sup> ~~it~~ seems a far less empty, cold void than modern space. It makes the universe smaller and compact like a miniature painting. Thus man is reassured and not lonely, for he knows of God's closeness and supervision over the whole.

PICTURE OF THE UNIVERSE - NOTES

- 1) General works consulted for the Medieval theory of the heavens:  
S. Toulmin and J. Goodfield, The Fabric of the Heavens, London 1963, A. Koestler, The Sleepwalkers, London 1969, A. C. Crombie, Augustine to Galileo, London 1969, J. D. Bernal, Science in History vol. 1, London 1969, H. J. J. Winter, Eastern Science, London 1952, C. S. Lewis, The Discarded Image, C.U.P. 1970 and H. Naṣr Islamic Cosmological Doctrines, Harvard 1964.
- 2) Al Bīrūnī, Kitāb al Tafhīm, The Book of Instruction in the Elements in the Art of Astrology, translation facing text by Ramsay Wright, London 1934.
- 3) *ibid.*, preface p.3.
- 4) Browne, p.365.
- 5) For contemporary conventional usage see De Fouchécour, p.128.
- 6) H. Naṣr, *op.cit.*, p.203 et seq.
- 7) Crombie, p.92.
- 8) Alternative reading: saman for yaman, 'Abd al Rasuli, p.87.
- 9) P. Kunitzsch, Untersuchungen zur Sternnomenklatur der Araber, Wiesbaden 1961, p.106.
- 10) For conventional usage see De Fouchécour p.130 and p.131.
- 11) *ibid.*
- 12) Al Bīrūnī, section 360 et seq.

- 13) *ibid.*
- 14) *ibid.*
- 15) *ibid.*, sections 366 and 368.
- 16) *ibid.*, section 360.
- 17) Kunitzsch, p.23.
- 18) Al Bīrūnī, *loc.cit.*
- 19) The Fish supporting the earth is said by Steingass to be a Hindu concept.
- 20) For conventional usage see De Fouchécour, p.129 and p.131; Azraqī would seem more aware of the astrological connections.
- 21) Al Bīrūnī, section 435.
- 22) " " 430
- 23) " " 401
- 24) " " 447
- 25) " " 396
- 26) c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.130.
- 27) Al Bīrūnī, section 434.
- 28) c.f. conventional usage, de Fouchécour *loc. cit.* and p.131
- 29) Sharaf al Dīn Rāmī, Anīs-i 'Ushshāq, trans. by C. Huart, Paris 1875, p.20.
- 30) Al Bīrūnī, section 429.
- 31) c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.124-6.
- 32) E. J. W. Gibb, A History of Ottoman Poetry, vol.11 London 1902, p.89, n.3.
- 33) Al Bīrūnī, sections 429, 430 and 432.
- 34) c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.126-28.
- 35) Rāmī, p.45.

- 36) Al Bīrūnī, section 396.
- 37) " " 397.
- 38) E. Esin, Al Madīnat al Fāḍilah (The Evolution from the Pre-Islamic to the Islamic Turkish City Between the 9th and 13th Centuries), paper given at the 'World of Islam' Colloquium, London 1971.
- 39) c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.121-24.
- 40) De Fouchécour, p. 121, n.1. I am unaware of an 'English' convention.

- 4 -

#### INTELLECTUAL PERSPECTIVE

The universe which is seen in the Dīvān of Azraqī is a geocentric system pervaded by an order and exactness. Through its divinely ordained motions it may affect the lives of men. This picture of the heavens is one that owes its origins basically to the thought of the Greeks and Aristotle in particular in the form found among the Muslims. Such developments as there were, were of a minor nature. However, during the medieval period it was not only in the field of cosmology that the legacy of Classical learning still exerted its influence. The importance of Aristotle and his followers in Islam manifests itself in philosophy - and its various branches - and what we now understand by science.

In the Medieval philosophy (1) is found the dual concept of matter and form. Crude matter has form imposed on it by mind and has forms in it potentially. The form presents a purpose of perfection, which in the sublunary world due to the refractoriness of matter, is never realised. Unlike Plato's ideals, the forms of Aristotle and later philosophers are not universals, but apply to particular things; forms are substantial. This substance is understood in a special sense; it is a particular thing in itself and no other. Substance is the primary form of being, the real or that which exists in reality. It is pure potentiality (materia prima) which is determined

by form. Nevertheless in order to allow for change whilst preserving individuality, there is a substratum of essence. In the world there are four simple substances which are equated with the four elements: fire, water, air and earth. In the super-lunary spheres there is aether. The world is compounded of the four elements.

Substance also has attributes called accidents. An accident is that which cannot subsist by itself but only in a substance. They are of two types. Firstly there is the accidental attribute, which may belong to a substance for a time or to some and not to others, such as writing in man. The other type of accident is the inseparable accident which inheres in the specific form and is part of the essential nature, as the internal angles of a triangle equal two right angles. It may be a necessary concomitant such as laughing in man.

From such a sketchy outline we may turn to those occasions in Azraqī's poems when he clearly alludes to the contemporary philosophy. Only in the light of philosophical thought may many of his images be appreciated.

In such images Azraqī often employs 'substance'-jawhar, sometimes gawhar. Thus 1.730:

ان مملکت گرفتن و این ملک داشتن      در گنوه شریف تو بنهاد کردگار

"God put in your noble substance this conquering of countries and ruling of kingdoms."

In this line the 'substance' of the mamdūh may equally be regarded as his 'essence', a part of him which is inseparable. This is reinforced by the fact that it is God who places in him the

attributes (accidents) of such possessions and power. Likewise because these accidents are God-given they must be of the inseparable, essential type. The line also indicates the divinely inspired nature of the mamdūh's power.

The attribution of the accident to the substance is clearly understood by the poet as in l.285:

شمیر او باز بست گیتی  
عرض باز بست لایه بجوهر

"The world is bound to his sword(s) the accident necessarily is bound to the substance."

Accident ('araḍ) can only subsist in substance (jawhar).

In the same way the poet is suggesting that the world is only able to subsist by his sword, i.e. the power of the mamdūh. Lā bud also also suggests that this particular accident is of an essential and inseparable nature, called by Muslim philosophers 'araḍ lāzim (2). The poet here has used an image drawn from philosophy to express the power and might of his patron.

A similar image is to be found in l.563:

عیال "بست فلک بر بقای دولت تو  
عرض عیال بود لامحاله بر جوهر

"Heaven became a burden to your state/fortune; the accident is necessarily a burden to the substance."

Again we see the inseparable relationship between 'araḍ and jawhar, where the former has no entity except in the latter; likewise the poet praises his patron by suggesting that his state/fortune is the substance, i.e. that which exists in reality, and that the firmament

is the accident to it and which only subsists in it. Whereas the previous example had the qualification of lā bud, this line has lā mahāla which again suggests the accident is 'arad lāzim'.

Other examples of images involving jawhar are found in 1.1639 p.64, where the hand of the patron becomes the substance of affirmation and negation, wherein one finds affirmation as happiness and negation as misery, and in the following, 1.1769:

نہ بر زمین ہو تو محمود بیکری گردون      نہ در گھر ہو تو بنگاشت سورتی یزدان

"Neither upon earth did the celestial sphere reveal a form like you, nor did God fashion a form like you in substance."

There is here a play on words with 'form' which may mean equally a picture, portrait or image. However, in spite of the hyperbole, the image suggests, in accordance with the prevailing philosophical interpretation, that the form in part compounds the substance. The 'mind' which imposes the form is God. This is particularly apt from the poet's point of view for he is praising the patron's unique relationship with God.

The link between God and the mamduh is also seen in 1.1386 (to khan-i a'zam), where God consecrates (wagf kardā) in the Patron's essence (dhāt), i.e. the substratum of substance, the aims and desires of the two worlds.

As a final example of the use of substance and accident, we may cite 1.227:

طبیع گر فخر باد ز سہم جان سنان تو      مرتکار طبیع را عرض بگریزد از جوہر



"If the tempers learn of your mortal ~~deed~~<sup>sword</sup>, with regard to the impressions on the tempers, the accident flees from the substance."

It has already been mentioned that the simplest instances of perceptible matter were the four elements. These are analysed in thought into materia prima and determined by various combinations of two pairs of primary contrary qualities (hot, cold, wet and dry) or elementary principles, which act as 'forms'. During the Medieval period, following the Classical tradition, the combination of these qualities, or, of the four cardinal 'humours' (blood, phlegm, choler and black choler) to which they correspond, dictate the temperaments - or tempers, as we have translated tabā'i - of men. Thus in this line the ~~deed~~<sup>sword</sup> of the patron is such that it drives accidents from the substance of the tempers, stripping them of their primary qualities. Azraqī also speaks of the impressions (āṣār) of the tempers. Athar is another technical term used in philosophy (3); from a higher active being or thing - such as God - emanate influences to which, under certain conditions, correspond āthār (impressions) in lower beings or things. In contrast to higher beings the latter behave in a passive, receptive manner. In astrology impressions are the influences of the stars - higher beings with soul - upon men and the terrestrial world. In this particular line, not only does the ~~deed~~<sup>sword</sup> inspired by the mamdūh cause the accidents to flee from the substance of the tempers, but he also vitiates the impressions of the tempers which have been implanted by a higher active being, possibly God or the influence of the stars.

Tempers and impressions are found together in this line,

1.859:

اگر روح با او بود تو شد  
که طباع او بود تو دارد بر کار

"The impression of the Soul indeed became the impression of your maganimity, for the tempers <sup>put into</sup> practice the impression of your magnanimity."

The Soul in this line must refer to the higher, active being, God, or the influence of the stars from which emanate the impressions occurring in the world; in the same way the patron's magnanimity is inspired from above and may even be thought to pervade the terrestrial sphere. The poet equates the impression of the Soul with that of the patron's magnanimity which in turn influences the combination of qualities inhering in the tempers, and from the tempers all other qualities are secondary and derivative; the elements with which they are associated are also primary and form the basic matter from which other substances are compounded. Azraqī is again emphasising how the mamdūh's magnanimity extends to all being.

The idea that there are four tempers is mentioned in 1.879, and from 1.562 the poet clearly shows that in the person of the mamdūh there is the correct combination of tempers to cause him to be noble.

Integral ~~to~~ the understanding of the physical world of Aristotle, and ~~an~~ aspect which was retained in the Medieval period, is that everything had its natural state; it is a world of subordination where, for example, each of the four elements tend to assume their natural state; thus a stone returns to earth, for being heavy it is its nature to do so and likewise fire rises to join the celestial fire and so on. Because of the differing apparent weights of the elements, earth - being the

heaviest - tends to find its natural place in the centre of the universe (i.e. of the world), above which is water and then the lighter elements air and fire; beyond the sphere of the earth is the element ether. Without some appreciation of this attitude, the dimension of certain images employed by Azraqī might not be fully understood, e.g. l.1818:

از لطافت هلم تو مرکاب را فواید یک  
وز لطافت طبع تو مراد را فواید گران

"Because of sufficiency, <sup>your</sup> ~~his~~ sedateness calls the earth light and because of <sup>gentleness</sup> ~~pleasantness~~ his nature (humour) calls the air heavy."

The poet suggests that because of certain qualities possessed by his patron the very nature of the elements can be changed. This vitiates the purpose endowed in the elements to attain their appropriate ends; it destroys the Aristotelian doctrine of final causes, and if such praise were not hyperbole the physical world would fall to pieces. Furthermore the particular qualities in the line ascribed to the patron and the elements are not chosen at random. Latafat, which we have translated as '<sup>gentleness</sup> ~~pleasantness~~' in the humour of the mamduh is linked with the element air, which is transformed from being light to heavy. The humour associated with air is the sanguine one and latafat is a quality one would expect in a sanguine person. Likewise in the first half of the bayt, hilm is associated with earth which is heavy and whose corresponding humour is melancholy (black bile). We might justly regard hilm as gravity, a worthy attribute for a man of power, which is also a quality of the element earth. Melancholy in this case should not be thought of in its modern meaning of gloominess and sadness, but rather as an

indication of pensiveness and self-control, opposite to being sanguine (4). The patron possesses both in abundance and doubtless in the correct combination.

Elsewhere Azraqī associates qualities found in the patron with the elements, as in l.433:

برای و حلم و بجد و کفایت افروخت ز آسمان و ز خاک و ز آب و از آذر

"In wisdom, gravity, magnanimity and sufficiency he is more than air, earth, water and fire."

In order to complete the quartet of elements it is likely that asman stands for the sky of the sublunar sphere and thus air; as well as usage, metrical expediency may have been a consideration. As in the previous line quoted, the earth is associated with hilm (see also l.629), kifayat, here a quality in itself, is associated with fire, the air with ray and jūd with water. The correspondance of quality with element and its particular humour or temper is less obvious in this line. However, Azraqī is stressing that these four attributes of the king are greater than the four elements and that they are thereby greater than the physical world.

The elements, then, were determined by two primary contrary qualities. According to the theory, the members of two pairs of contrary qualities might be exchanged and one element be transformed into another. These changes of substance might involve one of both qualities, or two elements might come together, interchange their qualities and produce the two others. Since matter in the physical world was composed of the four elements, it was believed that by

depriving metals of all or some of their attributes and reducing them to materia prima, they could be given the attributes of gold. Alchemists of the period therefore searched for an elixir or philosopher's stone which would help them in this task by acting as a sort of catalyst (5). This is the sense in which Azraqī uses the word kīmiyā - it is the elixir or philosopher's stone.

The importance of kīmiyā to transmute gold is a familiar image in our picture of the medieval alchemist. Azraqī refers to it in l.749, where yellow grass becomes the elixir of gold when dust from the patron's horseshoe settles upon it, and in l.1605, p.63:

بنگم دستشوی تو ز اقبال دست تو      شگفت در آب ز رُسود و کیمیای لکن

"When you perform your ablutions because of the fortune of your hand, it is no wonder if the water becomes gold and the bowl the elixir."

In this example by washing his hands the patron makes the bowl the elixir to turn the water into gold.

The poet does not use kīmiyā solely to transmute matter into gold; when supplied by the mamduh it is capable of equally remarkable changes in other spheres, e.g. l.443:

ز نوک کَلک تو باید نادرات خرد      ز رُضمِ تیغ تو گیرند کیمیای ظفر

"From the point of your pen are found rarities of wisdom, from the blow of your sword is taken the elixir of victory."

Throughout the Dīvān, Azraqī uses images which reflect to

varying extents his knowledge of contemporary science and thought.

We have already considered the more striking aspects of his knowledge. However, he also mentions how the lode-stone (<sup>maghniyya</sup>~~maghniyya~~) attracts iron (1.790 and 1.1859); we also find references to medical terms, as in 1.1247 which mentions the cephalic vein (qifāl) and 1.554 which refers to shiryan, the artery where the pulse is felt. In 1.1346 there is reference to an older idea that man's regenerative powers are located in his back.

In conformity with his environment Azraqi's intellectual perspective is the medieval one which relies heavily upon the classical heritage and particularly upon Aristotle's work and his followers in the Medieval period. This perspective beholds a world where everything has its place. It is not a world where change is sought. What is not understood, is God's will or the influences of the stars.

INTELLECTUAL PERSPECTIVE - NOTES

- 1) For general works see: A. C. Crombie, Augustine to Galileo, London 1969, J. D. Bernal, Science in History vol 1, London 1969, D. J. Allan, The Philosophy of Aristotle, O.U.P. 1970, and E. I. articles on athar, 'unsur', 'arad', dhāt and djawhar.
- 2) See E.I. (2) 'arad'.
- 3) *ibid* athar.
- 4) These two humours are shown as opposites, see Crombie, *op. cit.*, p.170.
- 5) See Crombie, p.141-2

- 5 -

### THE MINERAL WORLD

The points considered in this section are:

- a) the stones mentioned by the poet, their attributes and identification, and
- b) the part they play in the world of Azraqī as revealed in his *Dīvān*.

#### Amber

There are two terms which Azraqī uses for 'amber': kahrubā and bījāda. More precisely bījāda may mean amber or it also may mean a 'stone resembling a ruby' (1). The poet's use of these two words suggests that in fact he did have in mind two different substances.

As the word itself suggests, kahrubā has the property of attracting straw; this is the substance that is true amber and during the Middle Ages was normally obtained from the southern coast of the Baltic Sea (2). Its attraction of objects such as straw is due to the fact that when rubbed it easily builds up static electricity (3). Azraqī's use of kahrubā indicates his knowledge of the mineral in this respect; thus 1.2109:

هو کهر یا چو کاهست سیخ و حلق عدوت      شگفت نیست اگر کهر را رباید کاه

"Your sword and your enemy's throat are like amber and straw;  
no wonder if amber attracts (rubāyad) straw."



We also find it mentioned in 1.199, where Azraqī speaks of 'a blade of amber' (shakh-i kahrubā) being used for ornamentation. On no occasion when using kahrubā is there any indication of its colour, except possibly 1.199, where it is mentioned in the same context as saffron. This would suggest a yellow colour, which is the usual colour for this mineral (4).

The usage of bījāda shows that amber is not the stone the poet has in mind. Certain lines, such as 1.399 where at dawn Saturn is described as an amber-coloured bolt (nāvak), give us little indication as to its properties. However, elsewhere it is the redness of bījāda that is emphasised: 1.1639, p.67 tells of bījāda dripping from the turquoise-coloured spear-point of the king; this alludes to blood and the redness is shown in the first half of the bayt, where vermillion (shangarf) pours from the king's sword. Further evidence for the colour is found in 1.691, where ambergris-scented bījāda stands in apposition to the ruby (yaqūt) of the rose (gul). It is 1.581 that suggests most clearly that bījāda is a red gemstone:

بیش ز گوهر و سجادہ بدخشان  
بطبع لعل تر آمد بسی و شیرین تر

"Her lips of pearls/jewels and bījāda from Badakhshān by the nature of ~~moist~~ la'l became very moist and sweet."

As lips, especially those of the beloved are red, so the colour of bījāda. That this stone is red and also very similar to ruby (yaqūt) is attested by Tūsī (5); he also states that it is found, as Azraqī says, in Badakhshān (6). Bījāda may be the garnet, 'a stone like a ruby', found in Badakhshān, mentioned by Qazvīnī (7). The

apparent confusion between bījāda and kahrubā may in part be explained by the fact that Tūsī also regarded bījāda as having the property of attracting straw etc. (8). We should note that Tūsī ends his statement to this effect with Allāh a'lam. Clearly Azraqī has in mind a red stone, similar to the ruby, which was found in the area of Badakhshān. (c.f. la'l below).

#### La'l

For Azraqī the quality of this gem that has the greatest importance is its colour. It is as red as lips in 1.580, as red as blood in 1.476, as red as wine in 1s.688, 312 and 309; in 1.1216 it is the colour of lāla and likewise in 1.1731. Obviously we have here a precious stone which is red in colour. However, it is not true ruby. Tūsī clarifies the situation for us (9); he tells us that there are various kinds, the best being red, shining, pure and transparent. It is similar to ruby (yāqūt) but not so hard; it was formerly unknown until revealed by an earthquake in Badakhshān; it is found encapsulated in special stone; its humours are hot and dry and it renders the bearer safe from being killed and having bad dreams; its characteristics are similar to ruby; <sup>fraudsters</sup> ~~fraudsters~~ use bījāda and crystal and its faults and blemishes are similar to ruby.

Azraqī also speaks of Badakhshī la'l (1.2013) and to complicate matters also of Shushtārī la'l (in 1.2014). This stone is the balas, a type of spinel (10). The English word 'balas' is derived through Medieval Latin from 'Badakhshān' (11).

Associations with majesty are found in 1.198 and 1.737, where we also have a reference to the power of the sun in the generation

of gems (see also below):

وز فر خدمت تو کنون از شعاع او  
لعل بدیع رویه و یاقوت آبدار

"Because of the charisma of your service, there grows now from its (sun's) splendour rare balas and lustrous ruby."

### Emerald

Emerald, which is always called zumurrud, occurs on at least half a dozen occasions. Not surprisingly it is its greenness which most attracts the attention of Azraqī and he puts it to most use in the tashbīb of his qaṣā'id. Thus in 1.266 the leaves of trees in Ṭughānshāh's garden are of emerald. In 1.157, emeralds and grass have the same colour, although they are of different species (jins); also the line following mentions that this particular stone is found mounted (nishānda) in the crowns of kings, a fact which is again emphasised in 1.1736, p.71.

On two other occasions the poet alludes to another attribute of emerald which was popularly held; firstly 1.2079-80:

شکل مار و بزنگ زبردست یقین  
سیاه زلف و خط لبزست ای بت دلخواه

بنا نهاد دو مار تو بر زرد سر  
گر ز زرد گردد دو چشم مار تپاه

"O beloved idol, truly your black locks and newly-grown beard have the form of the snake and the colour of emerald; why do your two snakes place their heads on the emerald if the two eyes of snakes

are destroyed by emerald?"

and secondly 1.59-60:

بهارى ابرسيه خام کند و پيچنده  
بهار افغى ماند دنان بر آتش و آب  
اگر زمره صحران نور داد بدو  
ز دیده ابر چرا بر زمین فشانند مذاب

"In spring the swift, twisting, black cloud resembles the viper, its mouth full of fire and moisture; if it received no light from the emerald of the desert, why is liquid from the eye of the cloud scattered on the earth?"

The meaning of these lines can only be made clear by reference to the belief that the emerald was capable of making snakes blind. The popularity of this fact is attested by Ṭūsī, who also records al Bīrūnī's scepticism (12). Whether Azraqī believed this phenomenon or not is unimportant. His use of it is for poetic effect.

#### Yāqūt

Yāqūt, ruby, is one of the commoner gem-stones found in the work of Azraqī and it is an important one. Let us consider how Ṭūsī regarded this jewel for it may help us to understand better its meaning in the *Dīvān*.

Ṭūsī devotes a large section in the Tansūkh-nāma to a discussion of ruby (13). He regards it as the noblest and finest of gems due to its nature (tabī'at), constancy, usefulness, value etc; he also quotes from the Qur'ān regarding it (14). Of its various varieties the finest is red (15).

Azraqī also regards this stone highly for he links it with his mandūh, whose charisma, l.1327, can produce rubies from gourds, and in l.1746, p.71, rubies, in the company of emeralds, are found in the crowns of kings. The poet also stresses the redness of the stone; in l.1239 it is as red as blood, and in l.1533, it is as red as the lips of the beloved.

Azraqī also mentions bahramān in l.1604 and l.2021. In neither line is it fully clear that Azraqī is speaking of a type of ruby; indeed l.1604 obscures the matter by linking it with turquoise. Nevertheless bahramān was a type of ruby, which Tūsī regards as the finest, although pointing out that Al Bīrūnī says that bahramān was considered the finest in Hind, whereas in Iran the finest kind was held to be rummānī (16). We do not know which Azraqī regarded as the finer; he certainly means a precious gem.

Red rubies are found in mines (l.1556).

On a number of occasions tells us about the unusual properties of the ruby. What interest him most in this respect can be seen from l.306, l.419 and the following ls.1557 and 8:

که گفت دانه یاقوت زیر آتش سیزد  
خنگ بود چو پود روز برف در بهمن  
اگر بر آتش طبع تو بر نهی یاقوت  
ز آفتگی زیانسی برون همه روض

"For it is said that a ruby in a hot fire is cool like the air on a snowy day in Bahman. If upon the fire of your nature (i.e. the

mamdūh's) one puts yāqūt, through the heat oil will run forth from its centre."

The suggestion that the ruby is impervious to heat is to some extent substantiated by Tūsī who says that although it turns white in a fire, it turns back to its original colour (17).

We also find the suggestion that the sun is instrumental in forming ruby; this is a concept that we have already found above (18); examples are ls.737 and 464, which follows:

اگر خورشید بوی دست رازش      شمس گرم زمین یاقوت اصر

"Were the sun his bountiful hand, the form of the earth would become red ruby."

#### Mīnā

Mīnā and its various meanings has already been discussed in an article by Aga-Oglu (19). Before we see how his findings might apply to the use of the term in the Dīvān, we should examine Azraqī's use of it.

When Azraqī speaks of mīnā, it always implies the colour green, especially the greenness of the leaves and plants in the spring; as examples we may cite lines 266, 335, 338 and 589. This is almost the sum of information that can be gleaned from the Dīvān. However on one occasion we learn that mīnā comes from Baṣra; 1.2013:

بینای بهری است بهمانا، مهرغزار      لعل بدخشی است بهمانا، بارغوان

Indeed in the meadow is Baṣran mīnā, indeed upon the arghavān there is balas from Badakhshān."

Unfortunately neither the sources examined by Aga-Oglu, mainly Tansūkhnāma and al Bīrūnī's Kitāb al Jamāhīr fī Ma'rifat al Jawāhīr (20), nor a compendium such as Nuzhat al Qulūb (21), give any assistance as to its point of origin being Baṣra.

This last fact does not help us in an attempt to establish what mīnā means to Azraqī. Mehmet Aga-Oglu gives three meanings for the term: a) enamel, b) spiritual, heavenly, and c) emerald (22). The second meaning does not concern us here. From al Bīrūnī and Ṭūsī he deduces that zabarjad is the finest kind of emerald and that mīnā is ordinary emerald (23). With regard to mīnā being enamel, he tells us that it was also a technical term for glaze whose most favoured colour was green and that the earliest positive reference in Persian is found in Ṭūsī (24)

Our problem is to decide whether Azraqī has in mind enamel or emerald. The greenness of mīnā is clearly established; it is also to be noted that mīnā is often used in the company of precious stones, such as balas in l.2013, and with pearls, l.335, and coral, l.1630, p.70. Obviously mīnā is a valuable commodity, such as emerald certainly was. It is difficult to see how mīnā, as a green enamel glaze, could have any similar value apart from being indicative of rich colour. Surely it is the objects which were enamelled with mīnā which would be held of great value, such as the luxury mīnā'ī which was so successfully manufactured during the Saljūq period (25).

We might be able to say with greater confidence that when speaking of mīnā, Azraqī has in mind ordinary emerald, were it

not for the fact that on one occasion it is used in the same line as emerald, zumurrud, and apparently in apposition to it; this suggests at the very least that it is different from zumurrud; 1.266:

درختانی از عود و برگ از زهره      نباشی زمین و خاکش ز عنبه

"Its (the garden of the sarāy) trees of aloes-wood and leaves of emerald, its plants of mīnā, its dust of ambergris"

If here Azraqī is indicating neither green glaze nor a synonym for true emerald, zumurrud, then clearly another precious gem is intended; from the study of Aga-Oglu it is clearly related to emerald. The gem-stone emerald is a variety of beryllium minerals; another variety of a coarser kind is the stone beryl (26), and it may be this stone which is mīnā.

### Pearls

Although pearls are not regarded as minerals, I have chosen to include them in this section, because they were thought of as precious objects and their function in Azraqī's poetry is similar to that of gems.

A large terminology grew up around pearls as is clear from the details given by Ṭūsī and the large section to which he devotes his discussion of them (27). Azraqī, also has a comparatively large vocabulary on the subject of pearls. He uses as well as gawhar, durr, murvārīd and lū'lū', described variously as baydā, lāla, maknūn and khūshāb. Such a large vocabulary serves to indicate that pearls were highly esteemed and part of a thriving trade.

Gawhar as well as meaning pearl may also have the meaning of



gemstone in general. It is occasionally difficult to decide whether the poet has in mind pearls or precious stones in general; 1.242:

نبود آگاه اسکندر پوشداد حد تاریکی / که بر گویهری رانده ز بر خاک آدم و اشقر

"Alexander, when returning from the frontier of darkness, was unaware that he was riding his black and chestnut horse upon jewels/ pearls, and not earth."

In this example, although either alternative would fit the meaning, precious stones rather than pearls are meant.

Apart from the two meanings of gawhar, that have just been mentioned, the word has other meanings, such as substance and lustre. Being an erudite poet, Azraqī loses no opportunity to pun on the varied meanings; however, here, we shall concern ourselves with gawhar only when it means pearl (28).

Azraqī's main use of pearls in a metaphorical way is found in his various descriptions of rain. In such cases raindrops are compared to pearls. At times his metaphors become very ornate, such as 1.208:

دخان ابر لؤلؤ بیز غبرسای هر ساعت / زمینا بر کشت لؤلؤ بنیل اندر دمه غنبر

"The mouth of the pearl-sifting, amber-scented cloud every moment draws up pearls from the mīnā, expires amber-gris into nīl"

Other examples of a similar nature are found in lines such as 1.7 and 1.338.

Elsewhere we find pearls compared to tears, 1.319, or likened

to the frozen surface of a pond, 1.325; in 1.31 they are like stars, and bright or shining in 1.29; in the following, 1.580, they are the teeth of the beloved:

غلام آن لب چون گوهر بدشانم      بدست صنع نهاده دهری و دو گهر

"I am the servant of those lips like jewels from Badakhshān, in which a skilful hand has put thirty-two pearls."

Azraqī also makes use of highly conventionalised metaphors, as in 1.253:

کنان بخت توام شاهای تلمیق کنه نونو      معانی یای چون لؤلؤ توانیهای چون فلک

"Now your fortune, O King, instructs me anew: elegances of speech like pearls, rhymes like sugar."

The idea of beautiful and elegant speech or verse being like pearls is a familiar one in Persian poetry; a more famous example which comes to mind is from Ḥāfiz (29):

غرل گیتی و در سفتی بیا و فوکی بخوان حافظ      که بر نظم تو افشاند فلک عقد شیرا

"You have recited your ghazal, you have pierced the pearls, come and sing sweetly Ḥāfiz, that heaven may scatter upon your verses knots/necklaces of the Pleiades."

A similar image is found in 1.367.

Azraqī's knowledge of pearls, their types and origin is nowhere <sup>expanded</sup> ~~elucidated~~ in the Dīvān. The knowledge we can gain from him is limited. He mentions pearl-divers, 1.55, and the pearls of 'Umān,

1.14, so he is aware that an important source for pearls was - and indeed still is - the Persian Gulf (30).

In 1.67 we find the interesting idea that pearls were generated by raindrops falling into the open shell:

گر آب ابر بگردد صدف بنام عدوی  
فشک کند بگودر چو بولوا خوشاب

"If a shell were to seize raindrops in the name of his enemy, they would dry up in its throat like fine pearls."

The popularity of this tradition is attested by Tūsī, who also adds that the month of Naysān was the time when such things happened (31).

Finally we should mention that there are occasions when pearls and the munificence of the monarch are emphasised; this serves to show that they were not only highly valued but much favoured by the kings, e.g. 1.231 and the following 1.229:

جهان گردد گفت بودی سخا تو بیک ساعت  
ز آتش بر کشیدی در ز خاکش برفشندی زر

"If the world were in your hand, your liberality would extract pearls from its waters and scatter gold from its dust."

### Gold

It is not surprising to find that gold is one of the commonest minerals mentioned in the Dīvān. We may divide the usages of the metal into various sections.

Gold is used in a purely descriptive manner where the colour of the metal, yellow, is the quality which most interests Azraqī.

In 1.589, we find the yellow of gold contrasted with the greenness of the garden, and again in 1.212, the poet speaks of pure gold - zar-i sādā - as being the colour of the rose (gul); in both instances the use of gold rather than the colour yellow adds a richness to the imagery which might be otherwise lacking.

The use of gold, rather than the mere colour that it indicates, to express richness is most clearly established when we consider the relationship that is found between gold and various aspects of kingship. Indeed, in 1.1605, the power of the king is capable of turning gold into water, and in 1.224, the king's munificence, compared to the sea, is described as 'gold-scattering' - zar-afshān. Another example is found in 1.229, and again in 1.465. Most importantly it is gold from which the very crowns of kings are made (1.571), establishing it as a noble metal in more than one sense; in this same line the lofty nature of the metal is contrasted with a lowly one: lead.

The Dīvān also reveals a number of uses to which gold was put. In the qasīda in praise of Amīn al Dawla Ṣahīr al Mulk Sa'īd b. Muḥammad, whom we assume is a government official, we find the use of gold mentioned in connection with the art of calligraphy (1.614 and 1.616); the use of gold, presumably in gilded letters, is here alluded to. The use of gold in the manufacture of coins is noted by Azraqī as in 1.412, where we learn that the king's name is also inscribed on them. In 1.1912, gold is inscribed (nigār gīrad) and made into dīnārs. Other uses for gold include belts (1.528), sword belts (1.526) - a reference to cloth worked with gold (?) - and for plates (pīrāya) in 1.332. Gold also occurs in ingots

(sabika) in 1.1544, and 1.544 where ingots are shūsha.

Of the various properties of gold its use in alchemy (see above) is mentioned in 1.72. Certain lines such as 1.412 and 1.610 draw attention to the relationship between gold and certain heavenly bodies, (see section on the Universe) and in particular the sun. The influence of the sun in the formation of gold, as in 1.610, should not be regarded as merely astrological association for metals were held to be generated by the power of the sun (32).

1.544 seems to suggest that gold is impervious to water and fire:

تنی جو شوشہ ز کمرہ ام درین معنی      کز آب و آتش نقصان نیاند شوشہ زر

"I made my body like an ingot of gold in this respect that water and fire have no effect on the ingot of gold."

Obviously some popular notion is alluded to.

#### Silver

The use of silver, usually sīm, in the Dīvān tells us little about the metal. Azraqī's main concern is with its colour and the implication of its value.

The value of the metal may be seen in the way that we find it used with that other precious metal-gold, as in 1.205 and 1.388. Also, of course, it was used for coins as is pointed out in 1.412. The regality of the metal is also indicated by 1.275 (assuming that here nugra means silver rather than gold):

زبس نقره کړی جو کاخ سلیمان      زبس استواری چوسه سکندر

"From so much silver-work it (the king's palace) is like the palace of Sulaymān, so strong it is like the Wall of Alexander."

Used descriptively we find tears to be silver and also the cheeks in 1.578, and the moon is silver-faced, as in 1.671. In 1.614 (33) and 1.616 there are complicated metaphors where it seems that paper is compared to silver, with gold as the ink etc.

### Steel

Steel, pūlād, occurs about half a dozen times in the Dīvān. It is associated with weapons as in 1.308, where the king pierces the mountain with a steel-like dart. Usually, however, strength and hardness are implied, especially with regard to the mamdūh. In 1.303 the king, Ṭughānshāh has legs or feet like steel and in 1.306 he is like an 'ar'ar' of steel on the mountain - side. Moreover, the power of the king is such that he can melt Chinese (chīnī) steel in his grip as the prophet Dāwud (34).

### Turquoise

Turquoise, pīrūza, is a stone which is still mined today in Khurāsān as it was in the Middle Ages (35). Although the stone is popular, the fact upon which Azraqī draws most in his poetry is its characteristic colour. It is especially for him the colour of water as in 1.1604 and 1.713 (36). The most striking example is found in 1s.1612-3, p.66 (37):

دیروزه همجو سیم کشیده فرود  
از گوشه مزمل زرین بآبدان  
گوی ز زر بختی همی پوست بکنه  
نجان سیم بکیر پیروزه استخوان

"Turquoise like drawn silver runs down from the mouth of the golden pipe (38) to the water-butt; you would say a silver-bodied, turquoise-bound serpent is casting off a skin of refined gold" (39)

#### 'Aqīq

This gem is mentioned on a few occasions in the *Dīvān*. In 1.533, there is a suggestion that it is bright, however it is in 1.755 that we find the fullest information about the nature of the stone:

هون توده عقیق یانی بدست گیر  
در ساغر بنوری لعل خوشگوار

"Take in your hand the crystal cup of wholesome wine of la'l like a mass of Yamānī 'aqīq."

Wine is red as as la'l (see above), and here it is described as being like 'aqīq. As this is obviously the colour of the gem, it is no doubt carnelian or agate, which is the translation given by Steingass. Tūsī also substantiates Azraqī's statement to the effect that the stone is found in the Yaman, stating that it is mined in Arab lands (dar zamīn-i 'arab) and the Hijāz (40).

#### Marjan

It is debatable as to whether marjan, coral, should be included

in a section on minerals. Strictly speaking it is a plant. Tūsī regards it as being vegetable-like, between minerals and plants (41). Although it occurs on at least half a dozen occasions in Azraqī's Dīvān, little is revealed to us except that it is red in colour. In 1.1192, Canopus is described as being marjān jirm, which is a reference to its red colour (42), and in 1.212 the tulip (lāla), a red flower par excellence, is said to be of marjān.

### Mercury

Mercury, sīmāb, is one of the commoner metals mentioned in the Dīvān after gold and silver. Azraqī's use of it, is of a descriptive nature; he gives no indication of the importance it commanded in the science of his day (43).

When speaking of the cold winter that precedes the spring, we find the frozen surfaces of the pond compared to a sheet (takht) of mercury, 1.325, or snow is compared to the metal as in 1.61. In the early spring the rains and mists which envelope the mountain-sides take on the aspect of mercury as is shown in 1.320:

ابر سیاهی اگر سیاه ریزد بر کمر      دود سیاه از کمر تاگاه بنماید ابر

"Should the mercurial cloud pour mercury on the mountain slope, a vapour of mercury would suddenly mark the mountain slope."

Elsewhere Azraqī concerns himself more with the 'mercurial' nature of this metal, as in 1.1273, where the mamdūh's horse makes the earth quiver like a piece of mercury in an earthquake.

In the following line, 1.292, the poet is apparently drawing



the comparison between mercury and semen:

ز تف سنان تو نازاده دشن      جو سیاه بگریزد از ناف مادر

"From the heat of your spear, the unborn enemy flees from its mother's navel (sic) like mercury."

### Jet

Jet, which is how we have translated shaba, occurs rarely in the *Dīvān*. Thus we learn very little about it. However from 1.2232, we know that it had an ornamental use in rings where it was set in ivory.

### Crystal

We find crystal, bullūr or bulūr, used for wine goblets as in 1.755. It should be noted that it is the monarch who drinks from such vessels; as there are extant a number of crystal vessels inscribed with the names of their royal owners, they may be regarded as a royal prerogative (44). In 1.748, we are told that such is the power of the king that he can cause "a mine of crystal glass (kān-i shīsha-yi ballūr) to appear in the pores of stones."

### Almās

The use of almās, diamond, in the *Dīvān* suggests that to Azraqī's mind the stone has two main qualities. The first is the hardness of diamond, which was well known to Tūsī (45). Azraqī tells us, 1.1327, that due to the good fortune of his patron diamonds become hard, and in 1.1336 his diamond-like sword smashes up both armour and hero. Indeed Azraqī often associates swords and diamond as in 1.1247 and 1.1456. This is connected with the lustre of swords

and with which we shall deal elsewhere.

The following, 1.729, is not clear; there is obviously a play on words; it seems to suggest that diamonds possess the property of coming to rest in water:

کاز آب رنگ تبعی تو الماسا بردید      الماس جز در آب نگیرد بی قرار

### Iron

The use of iron, āhan, shows that in Azraqī's mind iron may almost be equated with armour and battle. He speaks of visors of iron as in 1.490. Typical is 1.361:

چون سراپای اندر آهین دید خصلت مترا      پای ننهد پدیش و دیگر پای نشاند ز سر

"When your enemy sees you from head to foot in iron, his feet do not move<sup>forward</sup>, moreover, he does not know his head from his foot."

### Granite

We have included granite here because it is an ordinary stone which is mentioned by name. Granite is not a good translation of khārā or khāra, for it means merely a hard stone. We do not know whether it is that granite from which our kerbstones are made or not. Perhaps it is best thought of as a large mass of stone, apparently continuous such as that from which mountains are formed. This is what Azraqī's usage suggests; he usually speaks of khāra being associated with mountains, as in 1.591. That the rock is hard is also implied: in 1.733, the king's spear cleaves caverns in the mountains of granite; no poet would mention such a thing unless some

extraordinary power or ability were necessary to accomplish such a deed.

#### Lead

Lead, surb, is mentioned in 1.571; it stands in apposition to gold, which is used for crowns whilst lead is used to make anchors and may thus be regarded as a cheap, base metal.

#### Marble

Marble, marmar, occurs in 1.303, where the buttocks, surīngah, of the horse of the mamduh are described as being marble. Is the poet alluding to the smooth, hard, white qualities of this stone?

#### Maghnātīs

Maghnātīs, which we may best translate as lodestone, has the magnetic property of attracting ferrous objects. This quality is well understood by Azraqī, as he shows in 1.790:

دل عدوی تو مانند سنگ مغناطیسی      که سان کرا سوی خویشی در سیکار

"Your enemy's heart is like a lodestone which draws your spear to itself in battle."

#### Lapis-lazuli

The occasion on which lapis-lazuli, lāzhuvard, is mentioned in 1.277, shows the poet's acquaintance with the colour of this stone rather than anything else; 1.277:

همه سایه و صورت و شکل ایوان      در آن برکه لاجوردی مهور

"Every shadow (shady place) and picture and form of īvān has

pictured upon it a pool of lapis-lazuli."

The ornamentation that Azraqī has in mind must be the very characteristic dark-blue, cobalt tile and faience work with which so many Persian buildings are adorned; the 'pools of lapis-lazuli' refer to the common device used in architectural decoration of the area, which is in the form of a medallion (46).

### Function

It will have been noticed that Azraqī employs mainly precious stones and metals in his Dīwān. Along with gemstones and precious metals we have also included valuable non-minerals such as pearls and coral. Because Azraqī has a limited view of the mineral world, we must not assume that this indicates an ignorance on his part; the perspective of the mineral world was far more limited in his day than ours, as may be seen from the list of minerals mentioned by Ḥamdallāh Muṣṭawfī Qazvīnī (47). Nor does the lack of information about the part played by minerals in the science of his time and the general world-picture give us any grounds to speculate in this respect. As a poet Azraqī speaks about and uses precious stones for his own purpose.

The poet links precious stones and the various qualities of other minerals to his mamdūh or more particularly his king, as the case may be. Not only do we find that certain precious stones are found in the outward signs of kingship, such as in crowns or forming part of the embellishments to the king's palace; they may also form part of the largesse distributed by the king to his adherents, and one assumes that Azraqī would hope himself to be included among their number. By their very position, kings are expected to be the possessors of riches beyond the reach of the majority of ordinary mortals. As well as wealth, they might also be expected to possess objects of great beauty, such as jewels. In this respect the poet another <sup>whereby</sup> has arrow in his quiver ~~which~~ he may use his poetic art to gain <sup>the</sup> favour of his patron and flatter him sufficiently to be amply

rewarded. This usage might well have been especially appreciated by Azraqī's aristocratic audience.

It is also clear that jewels play a very important part in the description of nature and in that of the beloved. However, they are employed in an essentially descriptive manner. It is especially the colours of the various gemstones which attract the attention of the poet; but underlying their superficial attributes they also add the idea of richness. It is this richness which gives the description of spring, for example, an atmosphere of gaudiness and gorgeousness. This gaudiness, emphasised by his use of jewels, is thematic in his poetry.

MINERAL WORLD - NOTES

- 1) Steingass.
- 2) C. McEvedy, The Penguin Atlas of Medieval History, London 1961, pp.28 and 88; H. H. Read, Elements of Mineralogy, London 1957, pp.329-30.
- 3) Naṣīr al Dīn Ṭūsī, Tansūkhnāma-yi Īlkhānī, ed. Mudarris Ridavi, Tehran, 1348, p.153; amber in Greek is electron, whence our word electricity, see L. J. Spencer, A Key to Precious Stones, London 1960.
- 4) Ṭūsī, p.152-3; he distinguishes two types:
  - a) yellow and lucid (shaffāf) called ātishī (fiery) and
  - b) dark yellow (sham'ī - waxen).
- 5) Ṭūsī, p.81.
- 6) ibid.
- 7) G. Le Strange, Lands of the Eastern Caliphate, London, 1966, p.437. This is also the translation used by V. Minorsky in his edition of Hudūd al 'Ālam, London 1970, p.112.
- 8) Ṭūsī, p.82.
- 9) Ṭūsī, pp.70-75.
- 10) Read, op. cit., p.307.
- 11) O.E.D.
- 12) Ṭūsī, p.60-1; we are told that al Bīrūnī had no success in

trying to blind a snake with various kinds of emerald, nor when he put ground up emerald into the eyes of the snake; consequently he says that however well-known this property may be, it has no basis.

- 13) Tūsī, pps.27-51.
- 14) *ibid*, p.29.
- 15) *ibid*, p.30.
- 16) Tūsī, p.34-5.
- 17) *ibid*, p.48.
- 18) see note 15.
- 19) M. Aga-Oglu, The Origin of the Term Mīnā and its Meanings, J.N.E.S., vol. V, Oct.1946, no.4, pp.241-56. In the Persian-English glossary of the edition of Tūsī, we find the strange suggestion that mīnā is lapis-lazuli, p.329.
- 20) Al Bīrūnī, Kitāb al Jamāhīr fī Ma'rifat al Jawāhīr, Haydarabad, 1335.
- 21) Ḥamd-allāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī, Nuzhat al Qulūb, trans. G. Le Strange, London 1919; see chapter XVll, where there is no mention of mīnā.
- 22) Aga-Oglu, p.241.
- 23) *ibid*, p.243.
- 24) *ibid*, p.253. Mr. Simon Digby also draws my attention to the fact that it was also applied to the green enamel used on metalwork; see G. Migeon, Manuel de l'Art Musulman, vol.11, Paris 1927, pp.21-23.
- 25) See D. T. Rice, Islamic Art, London 1965, p.68.



- 26) Read, op.cit., p.278.
- 27) Tūsī, pp.83-114.
- 28) These uses of gawhar are discussed below.
- 29) Hāfiz, Dīvān, ed. Qazvīnī and Ghanī, Tehran 1320, p.4.
- 30) Tūsī, p.86.
- 31) *ibid*, p.85.
- 32) For the importance of the sun's heat in generating minerals, see Tūsī, p.16-17, and Crombie, p.134: "Minerals (he) believed were formed by exhalations arising inside the earth under the action of the sun's rays."
- 33) Read kham for khār ('Abd al Rasūlī, p.37).
- 34) See Qur'ān, XXXIV, 10-11.
- 35) Le Strange, e.g.s pp.389 and 429.
- 36) The popular use of silver to represent water is not only limited to poetry. In many miniatures the painter chooses to depict water by silver paint. In the course of time the silver pigment often oxidises to black; for a description of the techniques involved see S. Welch, The King's Book of Kings, London 1972, pp.26-8.
- 37) In 1.1613, read thu'bān for tu'bān ('Abd al Rasūlī, p.65).
- 38) 'Abd al Rasūlī, loc. cit., marginal note.
- 39) " " " " " " "
- 40) Tūsī, p.115; in the Persian-English glossary, p.347, the editor mentions two kinds of 'aqīq: 'aqīq-i sulaymānī he calls carnelian and 'aqīq-i yamānī is called agate; there does not appear to be anything in Tūsī's text to substantiate this distinction.

- 41) Ṭūsī, p.198.
- 42) See section on Azraqī's Picture of the Universe.
- 43) Crombie, p.142-3; the corpus of the works of Jābir b. Ḥayyān, actually dating from the late 9th and early 10th centuries, mark important developments in both the theory and practice of chemistry derived mainly from Greek sources. The theory was promulgated that metals were formed by a combination of sulphur and mercury: "The Jabir corpus accepted the Aristotelian theory that minerals were generated from exhalations in the earth, but held that in the formation of metals the dry exhalations first produced sulphur and the moist exhalations mercury, and that metals were formed by the subsequent combination of these two substances" (p.143).
- 44) e.g. a ewer of rock crystal inscribed with the name of the Fāṭimid caliph al 'Azīz, see Rice, op.cit., p.91.
- 45) Ṭūsī, p.67.
- 46) Contemporary examples of this device are not easily found; to gain some idea of what is meant, one has only to refer to the elaborate designs of this type found on many of the great mosques of Isfahan.
- 47) Mustawfī, in chap. VII, lists seven kinds of metals: gold, silver, iron, lead, zinc, tin and copper; there are nine precious stones: diamond, garnet, plasma, emerald, cornelian, turquoise, ruby, sapphire and jasper. He continues to list 'stones of lesser value', 'common stones' and 'mineral unguents'.

- 6 -

### FLORA

This section will be divided into two main parts: the first will deal with the plants and trees that occur in the *Dīvān*. In many ways it will be almost a descriptive catalogue; the attributes and peculiarities of his plants and trees will also be noted and identification made when necessary or possible. Whereas de Fouchécour has already made a similar study, this one will be more exhaustive, (1). The second section will be an attempt to identify the perspective in which the Poet views this part of his existence in the broader context of the natural world.

#### Plants and Trees

##### 'ar'ar

This tree is usually translated as 'juniper'. It occurs on a few occasions in the *Dīvān*. Being a lofty evergreen tree it has similarities to the cypress (see below) and its metaphorical use by Azraqī bears this out. Thus in l.307 the figure of the king is compared to an 'ar'ar of steel; we also find the beloved having the stature of a juniper, l.224l. In either instance the image of the cypress could just as easily be substituted. This proximity of the two trees in usage is probably the reason why Steingass gives 'cypress' as an alternative meaning for 'ar'ar. Azraqī suggests that this

tree is to be found in various places; in the meadow (chaman) in 1.459 (by inference of the hyperbole in this husn-i maqta'), in the garden, 1.2241, and even on the mountain-side in 1.307, where the king is like an 'ar'ar on the granite mountain.(2).

We should not assume that the poet's acquaintance with this tree is solely through the poetry of his forebears, for it is common enough in the area, growing well at elevation. (3).

### Arghavān

The arghavān occurs on about ten occasions. Steingass tells us only that it is the "name of a tree, whose fruit and flower are of a beautiful red". It is usually accepted that this is the judas-tree (4). Azraqī has no doubt as to what it means to him. His concern is always with its blossoms. It is an image of redness par excellence: it is as red as blood (1.1623; p.66), or wine (1.62); it is the colour of ruby (1.691) and balas (1.2031). The season for its flowers is the early spring, as in 1.1663, p.68, where "the earth of early spring paints the arghavān". It is also a garden plant, 1.1948, and is to be found growing with the jasmine, 1.1601, p.65. As it flowers so early it may be regarded as one of the plants that heralds the end of winter and the coming of the New Year and its attendant regeneration.

### Bādām

The almond does not occur very much in the Dīvān, in fact twice. It is to be noted that it is not used as an image for the eyes or any other feature as occurs elsewhere in Classical Poetry (5). Azraqī's use of the almond is not encompassed by convention; his

reflects the results of his own observations. We learn that the track left by the deer leaves the impression of two almonds (1.2009) in form, as is indeed the case. Also 1.322 tells<sup>us</sup> that during the winter the almond becomes black and dry and when the early spring comes it becomes green and moist.

#### Rayhān and other 'basils'

At this point we have chosen to discuss the various types of 'basil' that are mentioned by Azraqī. What does he mean when he speaks of rayhān, rayāhīn, zamīrān and shāhasparam?

Rayhān and its plural, rayāhīn, are merely translated by de Fouchécour as basil and odiferous plants respectively (6). Our poet's usage suggests that some modification is necessary. Rayāhīn meaning odiferous plants is clearly established by 1.263, there the poet speaks of meadows having "the fragrance of rayāhīn." Its use in the singular does not point to 'basil'. The two aspects which are clear are its greenness and its delightful perfume. We learn that it is as green as emerald and has the fragrance of pure musk (1.1597, p.65); further support is found in 1.2065, where the "nigārkhāna" becomes a house full of wine and rayhān", here of course, the scent is referred to. None of these examples so far precludes basil as opposed to any sweet-smelling plant. However, 11.546 and 597 both refer to a Quranic episode in which Ibrāhīm passes through the fire (7). In both instances, the poet speaks of rayhān being set on fire. It is doubtful that he means basil in particular; greenery or green plants are meant. Thus we suggest that when Azraqī uses the word rayhān and its plural he implies any sweet-

smelling plant.

The use of zamīrān, which can mean sweet basil, is very similar to the above; it is green like mīnā, l.1963, and the sea, l.1789. It is also odiferous and dark as is shown in l.1836, where it assumes the conventionalised image of the freshly-growing beard of a youth (8). There is no evidence to suggest that Azraqī means any more than greenness and fragrance.

Royal basil, shāhasparam, occurs only once, l.1963. From this we learn only that it grows in the garden among other colourful plants and the suggestion that it is autumnal.

### Bīd

The bīd is the willow tree. Azraqī's use of it is interesting for it does not seem to be similar to that of his contemporaries (9), and hence is not a conventional cliché.

Above all, it is a tree of the open country, whose leaves are as green as emerald and are eaten by the wild ass (l.1733). Only once is it mentioned in the garden where birds sing in its branches (l.1603, p.65). Otherwise its use seems almost to suggest that it is part of the idyllic atmosphere expressed by FitzGerald-Khayyām in the famous ruba'ī of bread, wine and wilderness; l.2199

گلاب توی و کتان و فیسی و سید سید      شراب و مجلس خالی و ساقیان چو ماه

"The rose-water, ~~of~~ Tūrīn, Katān (linen), linen and the willow's shade; wine, a deserted majlis and cup-bearers like the moon."

The willow also occurs in l.2191, where the meaning is not clear. The poet says that in the evening the mamdūh should retire

to his tent and seek wine and barg-i bīd. 'Abd al Rasūlī suggests that this is a reference to some sort of matting (10). Possibly it is some sort of fan.

#### Bustān-afrūz

This flower occurs only in 1.1783; it tells us little more than its name suggests. However it does grow amongst shāhasparam, and the context is autumnal (11).

#### Samomile

One occurrence, 1.1602, p.65. There is the strange suggestion that it is golden in colour; called ughuvān.

#### Solocynth

The hanḡal is found only in 1.18, where the king's sweet and succulent nature can destroy the seed in the gourd. The colocynth is well known for its bitterness and as such is a symbol of it (12).

#### Ḍate

1.18; it has a stone in it.

#### Fundug

The hazel-nut is mentioned in 1.1167, where raindrops are compared to silvery hazel-nuts.

#### Gawz

This occurs only in 1.1142. It is not clear whether nuts in general or the walnut specifically is indicated. However, we do learn that gawz or rather the wood of the tree is used for fuel during the winter and that as one can break the nut on the frozen surfaces of ponds, we may assume that they are eaten at this season of the year.(13).

### Giyāh

When speaking of giyāh, which may be regarded as grass or even herbage in general, the poet's use is mainly descriptive. He emphasises that it is everywhere (e.g. 1.2131). He also regards it as being mainly green, as in 1.157. Due to the heat of the sun, it may be yellow, as in 1.749.

### Gul

Gul can mean either flower or rose (14). This fact can often be the source of much difficulty when interpreting Classical Poetry, for the context may not be sufficiently explicit to indicate when 'flower' and when 'rose' is meant. The rose by convention is associated mainly with three things: beauty, the springtime and the garden. All these aspects are present in the poetry of Azraqī; indeed, it would be astonishing if any were absent.

When speaking of gul, where a particular flower is plainly intended we shall refer to it as a 'rose'; elsewhere we shall call it a 'flower' (15).

Mostly the rose is red as in 1.653 and 1.719. It also possesses thorns as 1.789 shows. But in manner it is the redness and beauty which most impress themselves upon the mind of our poet. Naturally he follows convention and compares the rose to the cheek of the beloved, as in 1.2324. This repeats the usage in the preceding line, where the cheek of a parī is compared to a sūrī rose. This is a type of beautiful red rose.

The rose grows, or blossoms rather, only in the springtime. In 1.2361, we learn that at the time of Mihrgān, the autumn festival,



the roses are absent from the garden; and 1.1913 suggests much the same for the winter month of Day. Spring and early spring is the time of the rose, as in 1.333, 1.653, and 1.764.

For our poet the rose is located in the garden, as in 1.57 and 1.763. It is also embraced by the nightingale, e.g. 1.333. What is also apparent is that just as the rose is a flower of the garden, it is found in apposition to the lāla on the mountain-side; we shall have call to return to this point below.

Elsewhere we believe gul is meant to indicate 'flower'. Thus in 1.1602, p.63, we find flowers like the moon, presumably bright and shining; 1.774 speaks of a yellow flower with blooms like gold dīnārs; 1.697 the breeze at springtime forms the advanceguard for the flowers which will cover the mountains and deserts. There are other similar examples.

#### Hyacinth

The hyacinth occurs more than a dozen times. Azraqī's use of it is completely stereotyped and conventionalised (16). He always uses it as a symbol for the dark tresses of the beloved, e.g. 1.1936. It also occurs commonly in the company of the jasmine, where the latter stands for the beautiful face of the beloved, e.g. 1.1536. This is all we learn about the hyacinth. It is called sunbul.

#### Jasmine

As has just been mentioned the jasmine, saman or yāsaman, is used conventionally for the face of the beloved (17); in 1.1589, it also indicates the figure. Nevertheless, Azraqī also supplies such information about this plant as to show he knew more

about it. He alludes to its white flowers, as in 1.1947, and their pearly nature, in 1.1163. It is also a flower of the spring (1.1165), is associated with the garden (also 1.1165), and even the meadow (chaman) in 1.1169.

#### Jujube

Referred to as tabarkhūn, the jujube occurs only once in 1.495, where its bright red colour is stressed.

#### Khwayd

Khwayd meaning the unripe corn occurs a few times. To refer to what must have been a common sight is refreshing. It is the greenness of this corn which impresses itself most upon our poet. It is green like the sea, 1.596 and blooming and fragrant, 1.601, and grows in the plain (dasht) (1.2014) during the springtime.

#### Kūknār

The poppy is mentioned once, 1.631; we learn that the seeds in the poppy-head are small.

#### Lāla

Like gul, lāla presents certain problems of definition. It is most commonly translated as 'tulip'. Browne, however, chooses to think of it as a red anemone (18), and Melikoff has put forward the theory that it in fact means 'a wild flower' as opposed to the cultivated one, the rose (19). Azraqī's verse tends not to support this latter view. As Browne's suggestion has not gained great currency we shall translate the word as 'tulip' whilst fully accepting that this is inadequate.

By convention (20) the tulip, like the rose, is used as an

image especially of facial beauty. Azraqī often uses this image, as in 1.903. Further it is the redness of the flower which is emphasised, as in 1.2123, or in 1.50 where the wine is lāla-coloured. It is as red as ruby (1.1216) and even as red as the horns of the gazelle (1.1218).

In the company of the rose it appears as the flower of springtime, e.g. 1.1722 and 1.1880. On the whole our poet locates the flower in the mountains, e.g. 1.1880 and 1.1737. It is also found in the meadow (chaman) (1.658). 1.333 speaks of a lālazār on the hill-side, and 1.1731 of a lālasitān. This refers to the naturally-occurring fields of wild tulips that are to be found in Iran during the springtime.

In support of Melikoff's theory there are occasions when the lāla on the mountainside stands in apposition to the rose in the garden, as in ls. 1880 and 651. However the theory is weakened when we find that our poet also places the 'wild flower' in the garden. In 1.596, 'a fire in the garden' has tulips as 'coals'; in 1.647, there are tulips in the garden, and in 1.264, when describing the garden in the king's palace, we again find the tulip. Even if in this last example, the poet is referring to the face of the beloved, he would not have used 'a wild flower', but the 'cultivated' one, the rose. It seems clear that the lāla is a red, spring flower that is usually found growing wild, but which may also be found in the garden.

#### Madder

Rawyan, madder, occurs twice; on both occasions it is the

rhyming word. The red dye extracted from this plant was used in dyeing. Its redness, the redness of blood, is alluded to in 1.1539, L.1552 is as follows:

یو گرم خواہ کشتن ز خشم پنداری / مگر گردد در استخوان او ردین

(Read khashm for zakhm (21) )

"Should we become inflamed through anger, you would think the marrow in his bones were madder."

Does this mean that the marrow of his bones became red due to his anger? Madder would be appropriate here not only because of its colour; it was often used during this period for medicinal purposes and had the peculiar physiological effect of turning the bones of any creature that fed upon it red (22).

#### Mandrake

Called by Azraqī satrang, the mandrake is mentioned in 1.1178. Many legends and superstitions were associated with it (23). In Arabic it was the satanic plant, tuffāhatu 'l jinn. Azraqī alludes to the shape of its roots which were supposed to resemble the human form. The slaves in this line are from chīn, which probably means Transoxiana or rather Turkestan; indeed an area where this plant grew (24).

#### Nargis

The use of the narcissus is a highly conventionalised one (25). There is no indication that the poet had ever actually seen one. We find it as the image of the eye of the beloved, e.g. 1.593. It is also regarded as being musky, as in 1.1889; this may refer to

its scent, or it may suggest that the beloved's eyes are dark and lustrous. Azraqī describes the flower as being a garden one (1.206), where there is a suggestion that the blooms are of a rust colour (zangārī).

#### Narvan

From the context in 1.1624, it might be suspected that narvun, pomegranate, might be intended, especially as the same line speaks of lips like pomegranate-juice. However, it must be narvan because it is the word in the line which carries the rhyme. Narvan is translated by Steingass as 'a tall, shady tree' or the 'sour cherry'; naturally as it is compared to the beloved it must be beautiful in form. Hence the former meaning is more suitable to describe the beloved, being not dissimilar to the use of sarv etc. The narvan has been identified as the elm (26).

#### Nasrīn

This flower is a type of wild rose. In 1.1890, it seems to be a symbol for a feature of the beloved (27). The other occasion on which it occurs at least tells a little more about the flower: 1.1847, we learn that the nasrīn grows in dry, rocky places.

#### Nastaran

This flower, which is found three times in the Dīvān, appears to have various meanings. Among other things, Steingass tells us that it is the narcissus or the dog-rose; de Fouchécour says it is the 'égphantier' (28), i.e. the dog-rose or sweet briar. The information revealed in the lines of Azraqī does not permit us to be more specific. In 1.1583, he uses the flower in a conventional image to

suggest the eyes of the beloved; this is similar to the use of the narcissus, as noted above, and this may be the source for Steingass's entry. As the other lines refer to thorns (1.1585, p.65) and tell us that it is found in the garden, is sweet-smelling and is red (coral) in colour (1.1597, p.65), it would seem that the dog-rose is the flower in question.

#### Nīlūfar

The water-lily is not frequently mentioned. Azraqī's use of it reflects his own experience. It is a plant that is found in the garden (1.2286) during spring (ls. 1731 and 201). The poet is impressed by its form; he points out that its leaves are shaped like spears (1.201) and that the flower is cup-shaped, with pistils or petals again in the shape of spears (1.1731).

#### Orange

Occuring on two occasions, its colour is stressed (1.1182) and also its musky perfume (1.1788).

#### Pīlgūsh

Occuring only once, it is clear that a particular plant is intended. Steingass says it is the variegated iris or the dragonwort; de Fouchécour feels it is a type of lily (29). By context it is a spring flower; it grows in the garden with blooms - or possibly leaves - like silvery spears (1.334).

#### Plane

The chanār is a tree much associated with the Iranian world (30). In spite of this the poet points out that it is merely green (1.658); in spring it is host to the nightingale (1.775) and

in winter the abode of the crow (1.2280).

#### Pomegranate

The pomegranate, nār, which is a common fruit of the area, also assumes the guise of a conventionalised image in the work of Persian poets (31). On innumerable occasions in the Shāhnāma, Firdawsī uses the pomegranate when describing the bosom of a beautiful maiden. Azraqī uses the nār otherwise; his use of it is far more homely and not an extravagant symbol. Only in 1.838, where the pomegranate seed stands for the teeth and the poet's heart in grief exudes pomegranate juice, is a conventional use clearly reflected.

The fruit also occurs in 1.2035 in a gory scene: the dead warriors' heads are like pomegranates and the blood and fluid leaking away makes the gravel of the battlefield like pomegranate juice.

Its seeds are like pearls, as in 1.647, and this is why the poet uses the analogy of its seeds to teeth.

The fruit is also autumnal, as in the last line referred to and 1.648.

#### Quince

Quince, bih, occurs but once in 1.200. It is gold in colour, is found in the garden and is the food of the peacock.

#### Reed

The khayzurān occurs more than half a dozen times. Its use points to a familiarity with the plant on the part of the poet.

In 1.1809, the enemy resembles the reed in being thin and

yellow, which is firm as long as it is planted in the earth;  
l.1946 refers to it as being tall like golden spears, like 'aqīq;  
under the ground it is like a black snake (l.1560). The suppleness  
of the plant is stressed in l.1864; here because of the agility and  
suppleness of the king's horse, the poet suggests that its bones  
are composed of reeds. L.1905 may refer to the use of the reed for  
pens.

### Saffron

Usually called za'farān, saffron is quite common in the Dīvān.  
It is, of course, the bright yellow colour which impresses itself  
upon the poet's mind, as in l.773. In l.1957, we are told it grows  
in the garden, where the leaves are like paper of gold (32) mixed  
with saffron, autumn being the context. Saffron is scattered about  
the time of Mihrgān, i.e. during the autumn (l.1663, p.68).

In l.1811, we find an interesting image; through fear of the  
king, enemies have saffron coming forth from their pores rather  
than hair. A person with a fair skin, when frightened turns white;  
someone with a darker skin turns not white but yellow, the colour  
of saffron.

### Sanūbar

This is the pine tree. Like the 'ar'ar, see above, and the  
cypress, see below, the tall, handsome shape of the sanūbar is  
used by convention to describe the stature of the beloved (33).  
Azraqī uses the pine thus in l.1581 and l.2119, also it is to be  
noted, accompanied by the moon, which is the beloved's face.

It is refreshed by the spring rains in the month of Naysān



(equivalent to April), 1.518, and is found growing in the garden of the king's palace where it adorns the pathways (1.263).

#### Sapandān

Only 1.1702, p.69, mentions the wild rue, or rather its seed. When put, for example, put on a fire the seed pops; likewise in this line as soon as the lion is seen by the horse its neck-bone presumably jumps in an immediate response.

#### Sarv

The cypress is the commonest tree used by our poet to describe the figure of the beloved (34); several lines may be mentioned, e.g. 1.2178. Often the cypress is surmounted by the moon, representing the beautiful face, e.g. 1.831. Occasionally the tree is qualified further. In 1.2123, he speaks of sarv-i sitāh, which we assume is a type of cypress; the beloved is a 'once-clothed' cypress in 1.2107, which must refer to a young youth whose beard has just begun to grow. On two occasions Azraqī speaks of cypress trees from particular places; 1.2324 mentions a Ghātfari cypress. Ghātfar or Ghātfir was a quarter of Samarqand (35). We can find no reference to suggest that it was famed for its cypress trees. It is possible that Azraqī is referring to a particular person from Ghātfar. In 1.2318, an 'idol of Khazar' is said to have the stature of the lofty cypress of Kishmar, this being a reference to the famous tree which stood in that town and was said to have been planted by Zoroaster (36).

Apart from its metaphorical context, Azraqī imparts a little information about other characteristics of this tree. It may be

found in the garden (1.1192) or in the meadow (chaman) (1.1623);  
beneath it are found partridges (1.1603, p.65).

Shamshād

This, the box-tree, occurs in 1.1853. It seems to be used  
conventionally for curly locks on the face of the beauty (37).

Shanbalīd

The fenugrec is found in 1.1543. It is used conventionally,  
implying its yellow colour (38).

Shagā'iq

This flower is mentioned in 1.598. According to Steingass it  
may mean the tulip; possibly it is Browne's anemone (see above).  
The line suggests that its blooms cover the meadow like a dress.

Shrub

A number of observations are forthcoming on the shrub, which is  
usually gulbun.

It is associated with the garden (1.589). In 1.912, it stands  
in apposition to the mountain-tops. Its flowers may be golden as  
in 1.587, where they are generated by the action of the rains; and  
at dawn its shoots are drenched by the dew (1.340).

Shūragaz

See 1.1594, the meaning is unclear.

Sūsan

The sūsan, the lily is popular amongst the poets, where it was  
adopted conventionally as an image of the bosom (39). Azraqī provides  
up with examples of this as in 1.1836, although 1.1447 tends to  
suggest rather, that the lily is compared to the face or complexion

In either case it is the colour of the flower that is emphasised: it is silvery or white (1.1622). Added to this we find reference to the sūsan-i āzād, the white lily, in 1s.332 and 2149, where the colour is important.

#### Sīsanbar

In 1.212, we find the suggestion that this plant, which may be water-mint or mother of thyme, like the rose in this instance is golden in colour.

#### Tūbā

This tree should not strictly speaking be included in a section on the natural world for it is said to grow in Paradise (Steingass). Not surprisingly, therefore, our poet has little by way of description about it.

Effectively it is its paradisial nature that is substantiated in the Dīvān; 1.1580, p.65 mentions the bough of the tūbā in Paradise and in 1.555, it is mentioned in context with the well of Kawthar, as in 1.524.

#### Vines

Vines are mentioned in 1.515.

#### Violet (banafsh)

As with a number of plants that have already been mentioned, the use of the violet conforms to the poetic conventions of the genre (40). On the great majority of occasions when the poet speaks of these flowers, they symbolise the hair or tresses of the beloved as in 1.2158; they are also musky (1.595). In this respect Azraqī mentions one type of violet that is particularly apt; it

is the tabarī violet, e.g. 1.2323. Of the flower itself and its attendant characteristics, apart than its symbolic meaning, we find but a little information: it grows in the garden (1.656), it is the colour of indigo (or possibly the Nile) (1.2016); in 1.576 we are informed that the flower's head is bent over, like one's head over one's knees.

#### Vagvāg

As the tūbā was a tree of Paradise, the vagvāg tree is a tree of fable. L.1738 tells us that the tree has a thousand tongues, suggesting that it speaks. This fact is substantiated by illustrations found in various manuscripts (41).

#### Zarang

Zarang wood is mentioned in 1.1196. There is no indication as to what it is. It was chosen out of expediency for the rhyme. This plant has been identified as the berberry (42).

#### Khadang

This, the hard wood of the white poplar, often used for arrows grows in Chīn (1.1935). As before Chīn probably means Turkestan, for this tree was known to grow in Chāch and Khirkhīz (43).

From the foregoing analysis it is clear that Azraqi's use of plants and trees falls broadly into two compartments. In the first we see that a large proportion form stock images according to the conventions of the particular genre. Thus violets are the tresses of the beloved, her or his figure is like the cypress tree and so on. Opposed to this we have that part of the vegetable world which is

purely descriptive, usually of the springtime, and this shows a knowledge which the poet may have gained through his own experience. There is no reason to think that Azraqī was less acquainted with the plants of his stock images.

We must appreciate the importance that plants had for him and his audience. His landscape was harsh and the division of the seasons sharp. Life itself was a greater struggle and man was nearer to the earth than today. The colour and fragrance of the newly grown flowers in spring when the soil was regenerated was a time of joy and happy expectation of the easier times that lay ahead. Herein is the importance of plants and trees in his Dīvān. That stock images are used does not lessen this importance. They are all drawn from actual plants which formed part of his environment. His obsession and that of his contemporaries with flowers and the season stresses their importance in the culture. And it is an importance which still manifests itself in the Iranian world at the present time.

In the Dīvān we learn that many of the plants are found in the garden. This fact is not an figment of the poet's imagination. A look at descriptions of Persian gardens as in the work of Ackermann and Pope (44) or that of Sackville-West (45) shows how consistent Azraqī's somewhat disjointed descriptions of gardens are with the picture we have from other sources. Mr. Dickie's article on the Hispano-Arab garden (46) serves to emphasise the consistency and strength of the garden in the culture of the Islamic World.

Those plants which are not located specifically in the garden

and which we may regard as wild flowers, have in many instances been shown to have been a familiar sight in the poet's landscape. One recalls his familiarity with the spring-time beds of tulips on the hill-side or the shade offered by the willow. Thus we should not be surprised to learn that the 'ar'ar, for example, was famous in the town of Pūshang, the modern Ghūriān, close to Herat (47).

It should be clear that the vegetation mentioned, even when used as a stereotyped image, is part of the poet's experience as well as the expression of his imagination. By convention the tashbīb includes a description of plants etc. This delineation in no way distorts the poet's work. The countryside, the garden, its vegetation, the spring-time, all need to be understood - as understood by the poet and his audience - in order to appreciate his verse fully and explain how and why the constant repetition of this theme lasted for so long.

### Relationship and Perspective

This study in depth of the preceding section was necessary to demonstrate the prominent part played by the vegetable kingdom in the Dīvān and the acquaintanceship of the poet with it. We suggested that through the breadth, scope and knowledge indicated it is clear that plants and flowers are more than mere convention. We also began to suggest why it is so important. Now we shall expand this in broader context. For this, rather than refer to single lines in which there is reference to plants and flowers, we must consider the tashbīb as a whole.

The importance of the flora in his surroundings is made clearest when the poet speaks of the spring. It is in stark contrast to the way in which he regards the bareness of the winter months. Such feelings are unequivocally expressed in the tenth poem in praise of Amīrānshāh. The tashbīb lasts for forty lines, beginning with a description of winter before going on to sing the joys of spring; ls.324-27:

در درختان بهار صبا جان شدند اندر حرم      خلعت فردوسیان داد فواهد دارگر

آب ارگون در شهر چون تخته سیاه شد      گون یاقوت و روی در گیرد در شهر

در سبزه گلستان چون پای طالع شد      تا کم از ماهی بیای اندر کند طالع بر

آب گوی سلفوره پیرست اندام شد      زان بیاسیر بهره کام بختی بر گذر

"Although the trees have become like pilgrims in Haram, God will give them the robes of the denizens of Paradise. Although the water in the pond has become like a plate of mercury, it (water) takes a cheek of ruby and a face of pearls. Although the shoots of the garden have become like the foot of the peacock, in less than a month the peacock shall draw its feathers about its feet. You would say the water were a weak-bodied old man consumed by the years, through which in passing he stops for a while every ten paces."

Azraqī does not find the plants in winter to be attractive; the garden is ugly like the foot of the peacock, the season itself means ageing and cold to freeze the water; the trees may be bare or only clad in the simplest of clothing, like pilgrims, at this time of the year; but there is the knowledge that this will not endure, for with the spring the Divine Will shall turn things into a Paradise.

We find the coldness and misery of this season stated in poem 29, which is a short one on the subject of winter. The hand of cold tears the apparel from the branches and scrapes away the work of Nawrūz (1.1140). It is the lack of greenness and flowers that appalls Azraqī. The clothes of the garden are burnt without any fire; seek, he says, a warm house and light a fire (1.1141).

The misery and coldness and hard times of the winter are the contrary of the spring. Following the description of the garden with its lack of vegetation in winter in poem 10, there is the description of the garden in the spring. This description is typical of the many that occur in the Dīvān; along with the new



plants and flowers are other elements which form part of the poet's traditional repertoire, ls.331-5:

تخت سقلاطون گشاید ابر تاری در چمن      فوس بو قلمون نماید باد مشکین بر کر  
سوس آزاد را عارضی بیاراید نسیم      ارغوان زرد را پیرایه ای بندد ز زر  
هر سگی را لاله زاری روی بنماید فراخ      هر گلی را زند و افی سنگ بر گیرد بهر  
هر خازد بیلگوش از بوستان بهینسان      در سر آرد گشتن از زرد کلی زرین بهر  
باد عنبر یاس گردد و اندر عنبر عبیر      شاخ مینا یوس گردد و ندر آن مینا در

"The dark cloud spreads a dais of scarlet saglatūn in the meadow, the musky wind reveals a chamelion (coloured) carpet on the mountain-side; the breeze embellishes the face of the white lily and binds an ornament of gold upon the yellow arghavān: on every hill a lālazar opens up its face, the nightingale embraces every flower; the pīlgūsh raises aloft in the garden silvery spears, the garden covers its head with golden shields from the yellow flowers; the wind diffuses ambergris and in that ambergris is perfume, the

branches wear mīnā and in the mīnā are pearls."

The effect of the elements upon the landscape and especially the vegetation is sudden and dramatic; what is most impressive is the colour - yellow, red silver and gold - of the flowers as well as the greenness of the leaves; the contrast with winter is obvious. The other important feature is the perfume of the flowers spread by the wind. The scene is one of joy and 'dolce far niente' as in the line which follows those last quoted, 1.336, where we find beneath the trees gatherings of people, and later, 1.339, the hint of romance.

Of other similar scenes, which are found in the *Divān*, that in the beginning of poem 8 addressed to *Tughānshāh*, serves to stress the same features: we find saffron (1.199-200), the waterlily (1.201) and the wild-tulip beds on the hill-tops (1.202). All are the symbols of spring, promising the happier, easier times that are the opposite of winter.

We should note that the blossoms, their colour and fragrance are in essence the outward signs of the spring. This is their meaning for our poet. His concern is not with the plants themselves but rather with what they symbolise. Here we have the crux of his relationship to the plants, trees and flowers of his environment.

Azraqī observes the spring and the new plants and relates them to other things. We do not find him describing the vegetation in a manner that suggests it is gloomy or hostile; there is no hint of it being in any way forbidding. On the contrary it is all rich, pleasing colour and delightful fragrance.

He relates the flowers in spring to music. We have already mentioned the nightingale; in l.1165, we find

ز شخای سخن مرغکان باغ درست      بلعن باربدی بر کشیده اندر آبک

"From the branches of the jasmine the little garden-worshipping birds have sung in barbudī melodies."

Another example is found in ls.212-213:

گلی و لاله است پنداری ز زرسانه و مریجان      دمان لاله ز سیاه و روی گل ز سیمبر

شد آه های او گوی بی عدا فرو گیرد      نوا در بهره یاقوت و در انگشت خنیاگر

"You would think that the rose and tulip were of pure gold and coral, the mouth of the tulip of quicksilver, the face of the rose of sīsanbar; you would say its to-ing and fro-ing seizes melody in the pardah of yāqūt (and?) in the fingers of the minstrel."

However, the link with music should best be regarded in its relationship to another theme associated with the flowers and plants. This is the theme of romance.

The relationship between flowers and romance and love is manifest in the manner in which the flowers in particular are symbols of various features of the beloved. In the first section we referred to the large number of plants that are used in this way. This fact is so well established that it is hardly necessary to support it by direct quotation from the *Dīvān* of Azraqī. What should

be noted is the manner in which, in the taghazzul, an initial description of the flowers etc. of the spring-time merges into the description of a lover. It is as if it has its own gurīzgāh. An example is provided in poem 19, in praise of Tughānshāh. It begins with a description of spring, stressing the transformation of the landscape and its new greenness; then ls.767-68:

ز عکس لاله و از عکس سبزه بر فیروز  
دو نیم دایره از روی ابر باران بار  
گلان بری که ز لبی سبزی و ز لبی سرخی  
که بزی خطایار است و سرخی لب یار

"From the reflection of the tulip and the reflection of the greenness arise two semi-circles from the face of the rain-laden cloud: you would think that from so much greenness and redness that the greenness is the youthful beard of the beloved and the redness the beloved's lips."

Here the fresh greenery and the red of the roses cause the poet to think of the lover.

Alternatively it may be the lover that is thought of first, whose qualities ~~of whom~~ cause the poet to allude to flowers; thus in poem 20, ls.828-29 near the beginning:

طبری در دل آن ماه آیین ز نبیند  
اگر در سر آن لعبت زیبا رخسار  
از خم زلفی برگ سمن غایب یوسف  
سر زلفینش بر برگ سمن غایب بار

"Joy in the heart of that new moon-like one through the wine (causes?) an effect in the head of that beautiful plaything; from the curls of her tresses are jasmine petals scented with civet, the ends of his/her tresses upon the jasmine petals are civet-laden."

Whatever the direction of the train of thought, whether from flowers to lover or the other way about, we can see how the plants are ancilliary to the poet's concern with love. In so many of these poems, although he begins with descriptions of spring and its attendant plants, the poet rarely fails to allude to love in some way or other; for example in the very first poem although the tashbīb is a long description of a storm and the landscape, the poet still finds it pertinent to refer to the lovers Vāmiq and 'Adhrā.

We have already suggested a symbolism in his preoccupation with flora. Likewise in his treatment of the theme of love, Azraqī uses it as a backdrop. Additional evidence for this point of view is found when we consider the way in which the various plants assume a charm and fantasy. Not only are there the familiar metaphors where the lily is the bosom or the violets the hair, but on numerous occasions we find an exoticism as in l.266:

درختانش از عود و برگ از زبر  
نباشی ز مینا و خاکش ز عنبر

"Its trees (those of the king's garden) of aloes wood, its leaves of emerald, its vegetation of mīnā, its earth of ambergris."

The use of rare perfumes and precious stones lend an air of luxury and even gaudiness. In this example, as with others, the aim of the poet is to promote a charm and fantasy about the plants and

flowers. His purpose in doing so may be to celebrate the spring and Nawrūz, or to sing of his lover. However, because of the requirements of the qaṣīda, it is the praise of the patron and a suitable reward for himself that is his motivation; and the madh forms the main part of the poems. The description of flowers in the spring is indicative of a new year and a new hope which the generosity of the mamdūh can make reality; and the flowers, like the beloved, may point to the beauty of the king, such flattery aiming to loosen the purse-strings.

The vegetation as recorded by Azraqī shows him to have the stance of an observer; he views this part of his world with detachment. There is no real involvement or even nostalgia; consider the number of examples referred to in which he says: 'you would think' or 'you would say that' such a plant is like such a thing; this is an attitude of the observer, not of a man passionately involved with this aspect of the natural world. He sees the colour, smell and perfumes and hears the birds singing in the trees, but they are symbolic of other things. His interest is not in them for their own sake. Emotionally he is detached. Indeed nature is of less importance to him than it would be to another poet in another culture.

His relationship to the plants and flowers as an observer is part of the problem of discovering the perspective in which he viewed it. Apart from the elements bringing about the regeneration of the plants during the spring, there is no suggestion that there is any system in what he sees, or any cause and effect. Rather from

those plants with which he is acquainted, he chooses a number that are apt. The way the lines are strung together means that each of the bayts can stand independent of its context. This may be seen in ls.331-5, where not only the bayt, but even each misrā can stand as an individual unit. The description of each plant is, as it were, a particle. What gives unity is the context of spring. Perhaps Azraqī has a perspective of the vegetable kingdom which is 'atomistic' in concept (48). In the poetry he views the plants individually as they appear; the unity is provided by God, the Dādgar of l.324, who ordains the seasons and all things. This perspective in the larger natural world is an orthodox Muslim one (49). Azraqī then is consistent with his society.

FLORA - NOTES

- 1) De Fouchécour, p.214.
- 2) *ibid*, p.65 for conventional usage.
- 3) Encyclopaedia Britannica.
- 4) De Fouchécour, p.62: 'la fleur de gainier'.
- 5) *ibid*, p.66 for conventional usage.
- 6) *ibid*, p.87.
- 7) Qur'ān XXI,69.
- 8) Rāmī, *op.cit.*, p.43.
- 9) De Fouchécour, p.63.
- 10) 'Abd al Rasūlī, p.101 note.
- 11) De Fouchécour, p.91 for conventional usage.
- 12) Encyclopaedia Britannica and J. Dickie, The Hispano-Arab Garden, B.S.O.S. XXXI part 2, p.247. See De Fouchécour, *loc.cit.* for conventional usage.
- 13) De Fouchécour, p.67 for conventional usage.
- 14) " " p.68 " " "
- 15) For a brief discussion of the type of rose meant see V. Sackville-West, in Legacy of Persia, O.U.P. 1968, pp.274-77.
- 16) De Fouchécour, p.78 for conventional usage.
- 17) " " p.80 " " "
- 18) Browne, p.329, n.1.



- 19) I. Melikoff, La fleur de la souffrance, Journal Asiatique, 1967, 3-4, pp 341-60.
- 20) De Fouchécour, p.73 for conventional usage.
- 21) 'Abd al Rasūlī, p.79.
- 22) Encyclopaedia Britannica, and for conventional usage De Fouchecour p.91.
- 23) A. S. Beveridge, The Bābarnāma Description of Faghana, J.R.A.S. 1910, p.128, n.70 and Bernal, p.127.
- 24) Beveridge op.cit., p.117.
- 25) See De Fouchécour p.81 for conventional usage.
- 26) H. Sabetī, Dirakhtān-i Jangalī-yi Īrān, Tehran 1326, pp.150 228.
- 27) De Fouchécour p.85 for conventional usage.
- 28) " " p.84 and the same for conventional usage.
- 29) ibid. p.83.
- 30) Sackville-West, p.273.
- 31) De Fouchécour p.60 for conventional usage.
- 32) 'Abd al Rasūlī, p.68 reads raz for zar.
- 33) De Fouchécour, p.60 for conventional usage.
- 34) " " p.58 " " "
- 35) Barthold op.cit., p.68.
- 36) Le Strange, op.cit., p.335.
- 37) De Fouchécour p.88 for conventional usage
- 38) " " p. 86 " " "
- 39) " " p.83 " " "
- 40) " " p.76 et seq. for conventional usage.
- 41) There are no miniatures extant from the Saljūq period.

However, the Vagvāq tree did duty for the talking tree of Alexander. It is illustrated in several copies of the Shāhnāma, e.g. one of these is from the "Demotte" Shāhnāma now in the Freer Gallery, Washington (no.35.23), which dates from the middle years of the 14th century. (I am indebted to Mr. B. Robinson for his assistance in this matter).

For the location of the tree, see Hudūd al 'Ālam, p.228.

- 42) For the identification of zarang, usually called zirishk, as the berberry, see Taqī Bahrāmī, Farhang-i Rūstā'ī, Tehran 1316-17, vol.11, p.691 and Ṣabetī, pp.33 and 224.
- 43) Hudūd al 'Ālam, index D.
- 44) Pope and Ackerman, A Survey of Persian Art, Tokyo 1964-5, vol.111, chap.44.
- 45) Sackville-West, pp.259-291.
- 46) J. Dickie, op.cit.
- 47) Le Strange op.cit., p.411.
- 48) Ḥ. Naṣr, Islamic Studies, Beirut 1967, p.56.
- 49) *ibid*; speaking of the theologians' perspective of nature, Naṣr says "they represent the "atomistic" conception of nature. They "atomise matter, space and time and break the bond of causality which appears to connect all things together ... (and) finds its cohesion and connection in the Divine Will which creates all things at every moment and is the direct cause of things.... (They) dissect nature into separate and discontinuous segments in order to have 'gaps' filled by the Divine Will.....Yet, there is a unicity in nature through the single will that governs it and there is an inter-relation between things in their all being caused directly by the Prime Cause."

- 7 -

### THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

The following section will be concerned with:

- a) the animals found in the *dīvān*, their identification and attributes, and
- b) the position they occupy in the poet's world.

The horse is dealt with elsewhere (see 'Kingship and the Virtues of Kings'), and for mythological animals such as the *'angā*, *sīmūrgh* and the dragon see 'Persian Epos'

#### Ant

The ant, *mūr*, occurs infrequently in the *Dīvān*, in 1.1225, and in 1.243. In the latter, the obvious characteristics of the creature - its smallness and insignificance - are clearly alluded to; 1.243:

اگر جزوی ز رای تو چراغ راه او بودی      بیدی      ندیب ساریک گام مور بر رور

"If a part of your wisdom were a lamp on his (Iskandar's) path, on a dark night he would have seen the foot-fall of the ant on marble."

#### Tiger

The tiger, *babr*, occurs rarely in *Azraqī*. It is found in 1.2299, where the *mamduh* is 'like the tiger' (*babr khū*). Since the tiger

was considered by some to be more majestic than the lion (1), it is strange to find that it is so uncommon in the *Dīwān*, (2). Two reasons may be considered to explain this fact. Firstly, as an animal the tiger may have been quite outside the experience of the poet, and secondly it may have been a stranger to the repertoire of animals that a poet of the period may have felt himself justified in using. Nevertheless, we should note that the animal in question is associated with majesty, in this case *Tughānshāh*.

#### Butterfly

The butterfly, *parvāna*, is found in l.206, where the spring air pours 'silvery butterflies' upon the garden. The image here is most probably comparing silvery butterflies to snow or rain (3).

#### Chamelion

The chamelion occurs as *bū qalamūn* in l.331. We learn that in the spring the musky wind exposes a chamelion carpet on the mountain-side. The main characteristic of this animal for us is its ability to change colour. There may be a hint of this in the line just mentioned. What is equally likely is that the poet merely wishes to emphasise a very colourful scene.

#### Zāgh and Crow

Steingass offers several translations for *zāgh*: crow, raven, rook, even a sort of pigeon. Stephenson, however, in the zoological section of *Nuzhat al Qulūb* translates it as rook (4); crow is his translation of *kalāgh*, Arabic *ghurāb*, (5) and furthermore he points out that the crow is one of the 'five reprobates' (6). As the crow was despised by Muslims, we may hope that when Azraqī refers to

zāgh, he has in mind the rook and not the crow. Certainly the manner in which zāgh is used in no way suggests that it is the undesirable crow.

The bird is regarded as one of the birds of the spring-time, as in 1.330, where the poet refers to the shrill call of the rook (naḡīr-i zāgh) on the plane-tree. Yet in 1.54, it is the crow (ghurāb)<sup>which</sup> approaches the delicate (chābuk) shrub whilst in the other half of the bayt, the dove is in the company of the lily.

Although we have chosen to regard the zāgh as the rook, it is done so more from expediency than any absolute evidence. All three birds, rook, crow and raven, are similar, especially with regard to colour. I would not know how to distinguish between them. We have no good reason to believe that Azraqī could either (7).

#### Deer

We shall here consider rang, ghazāl, āhū and also in this section gavazn.

The rang is rare in the Dīvān. From 1.1737, we learn that the rang is found on the mountains where it eats the leaves of the tulip (barg-i lāla) and so produces milk in its breasts (pistān). To which animal is the poet here referring? Steingass proposes the following meanings: a wild mountain-goat, a wild ox or beast in general or a fine he-camel kept for stock. It appears that the rang is not to be considered as a type of deer. Also from the line in the Dīvān it is clear that the rang is neither a wild ox nor a he-camel. This leaves the mountain-goat, which interpretation is confirmed by the author of Burhān al Qāti': prey, the mountain goat, or the bull of the plains, gāv-i dashtī, (8). Unfortunately,

Azraqī's mention of the animal in question gives us no more useful information other than that it is a beast of the mountains.

The gavazn is similar in certain respects to the rang; in Modern Persian it means deer (9), and according to Steingass in the Classical it may mean: deer, doe, elk, stag, and also a kind of mountain-ox. Let us look at the Dīvān to see whether Azraqī provides any information that will make our choice of meanings more straightforward.

In l.1218, we are told that the buttocks of the gavazn become green through the unripe corn, suggesting that it is an animal that is found near or in agricultural areas. We also learn from lls.1838 and 796 that it has horns or antlers and they are hunted by the mamduh. Finally in l.727 we find the following:

در صورت گوزن ہی گردد آشکار  
از بیم شیردایت او شیردست کسی

"From the dread of the lion on his banner, the mettled lion became visible in the form of the gavazn."

This suggests that in contrast to the lion the gavazn is a timid, fearful animal.

None of these examples permit us to say with any confidence that the animal alluded to is either a deer or the wild ox. However in the following line, l.1218, mentioned above, we find that the gavazn and the ghazāl, which we shall show is a young deer, apparently stand in apposition:

ز غویه بجز بگردد ہی سرین گوزن  
ز لاد سرخ بگردد ہی سر وی غزال

"The buttocks of the gavazn become green through the unripe corn; the antlers of the ghazāl become red through the tulips."

It is not likely that the poet is using both gavazn and ghazāl to signify the same animal. The use of gavazn to confirm it meaning the wild ox is found in Nuzhat al Qulūb (10).

As has already been mentioned the ghazāl is found in 1.1218, where it is suggested that its antlers are red. That the ghazāl is the young of the deer is found not only in Steingass but also in Nuzhat al Qulūb (11).

The āhū is the deer or gazelle (12). Azraqī uses this creature in several ways and with varying attributes.

In 1.1838, he speaks of the Āhuwān-i khaymagī, which is a conventionalised usage for the youths (or mistresses) of the camp.

With regard to the animal itself, and its qualities and characteristics, we have a certain amount of information. Thus from 1.2326, we learn that the stag, āhū-yi nar, is very graceful in its walk; in 1.2008, during the spring in the company of the nightingale, its grazing-ground is brightly coloured (by the newly blossomed plants), and that, 1.2009, its footprints leave behind the form of two almonds. During the winter, 1.1144, it drinks from icy ponds. Its antlers are red in colour, as 1.1221 indicates:

ز نور تابش خورشید لعل فام شود      سروی آهوی دشتی پیر آتشین طغیان

"Through the light of the la'l-like shining sun the antlers of the deer of the plain become like fiery Khalkhāl cloth."

It is also to be noted that here Azraqī speaks of a deer whose

habitat is the plain (dashtī).

One of the deer's most important qualities is that it may be a musk deer. This rich and valued perfume (see below) was obtained from the musk deer (13). The poet alludes to this on several occasions; he speaks of the musk bladders in l.1833, and states in l.744, that the deer that eats the grass that has grown in the shadow of the mamduh's spear makes bladders of musk in its mouth from pomegranate seeds. More specifically, in l.2179, Azraqī speaks of the musk deer of Kharkhiz:

چو ناف آهوی خُزینِ مادحانِ کَرِا      بوصف خلق تو از مشک پُرسود افواه

"When describing your nature the mouths of those who praise you become full of musk like the musk bladders of the Kharkhiz deer."

Steingass tells us that Kharkhiz is the name of a city in Khatay celebrated for its musks and silk-stuffs (see below).

In l.725, we find mention of the āhū and musk:

با بوی گندِ لُکَرِ او آهوانِ هِنْد      بر دشتِ کَرِ نافِ هِی بگُندند فوار

"The Indian deer at the smell of the dust of his army cast in humiliation their musk bladders upon the plain of the Turks."

This suggests also that the āhuvān-i hind have bladders of musk; but how is it that they cast them upon the plain (dasht) of the Turks? As the mamduh, in this case is Tughānshāh, a Turk, the image involved in the line suggests the extent of his power and



authority.

To reiterate, for Azraqī the deer is the āhū and its young we have taken to be the ghazāl. In particular the poet is very interested in the musk deer because of its rich perfume. Rang and gavazn do not correspond at the period in question to their modern meanings, but indicate a mountain goat or ox and the wild ox respectively.

### Dove

In this section we have chosen to discuss those birds called gumrī and kabūtar (14). Before we attempt to distinguish and identify the birds in question, let us firstly learn what we can about them from what Azraqī says, noting any particular features.

The gumrī occurs a few times. It has strong associations with the spring; this is seen from l.54 where it associates with the sūsan-i nāzūk, and possibly in l.754 where the gumrī, in apposition to the lamenting nightingale, weeps without tears from sad eyes. The gumrī is also found in apposition to the singing nightingale; here the song of the gumrī in the king's garden is compared to the voice of the 'angā.

The kabūtar does not appear in the Dīvān as one of the harbingers of the spring. Its use is more metaphorical and descriptive. In l.2197, the flying kabūtar is like a ball of burning fire : (chū gū-yi ātish-i afrūkhta) and in the following, there is a similar suggestion that the bird is red in colour, lls.494-5:

<p>بر آن خاک از فرود آید کبوتر          کبرخون رویه‌اش در خلق و افر</p>	<p>از آنون ما حسین روزی ز گیتی          ز بس آغار خون گردانده سیند</p>
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"From now until the Day of Resurrection, if from the world a kabūtar should alight on the ground, because of the saturation of blood, whenever it picked up seed, the jujube would grow in its throat and crop."

This line also draws our attention to the fact that the kabūtar feeds humbly on grain. Indeed in l.1565 we learn that the bird eats millet (arzan); it also suggests that it is prey for the claws and beak of the falcon (shāhīn). Its weak and timid nature is also pointed out in l.291:

یَلَنَدُ از نَهِیبِ سَنَتِ مَخْوَاهِدِ      غَوَامِ شُکَرِ بِلِ و پَرِ از کَبُوتَرِ

"The leopard through dread of your spear, in supplication, seeks wings from the kabūtar."

Here the contrast in the natures of these two creatures is clear; where the leopard is, or rather ought to be, brave and strong, before the might of the mamdūh, it becomes timid and frightened like the kabūtar.

Steingass translates gumrī as turtle-dove or ring-dove; Stephenson translates it as turtle-dove and the fakhta as the ring-dove; Mustawfī also calls it 'a bird of pleasing notes' (15). This latter point is also one of the qualities that Azraqī noted about the bird. We may assume that the gumrī is the turtle-dove.

The kabūtar is given by Steingass as pigeon or dove, and Stephenson translates it as pigeon and also wood-pigeon (16). Azraqī's bird is probably the pigeon also; he has alluded to its eating grain; equally it may be the dove. Both birds are similar

and by no means distinct species. No doubt this is the bird for whom dove-cotes or/and pigeon towers are built and are a familiar sight today, especially in the area of Isfahān.

### Durrāj

This bird, the francolin or black partridge (17), is mentioned in 1.471:

(18)

زیم جان می کن کز نهان      و دراج از می صفا غنفر

"(At the beating of the drum) in fear of its life the lion hides itself like the francolin behind thorns."

The apparent habit of this bird of hiding itself when in danger may be as a result of observation by the poet (19). However, this behaviour of the bird seems to have been quite well known and as such may have almost become a poetic cliché; in Nuzhat al Qulūb we read: 'when another bird pursues it, it enters a thorn (bush), and takes firm hold on the trunk with its claws, and so remains safe' (20).

### Eagle

Whereas many of the other birds that we have already discussed are connected with the spring and its associated themes, the eagle, 'uqāb, being a mighty bird of prey is linked rather with martial aspects. Although the bird is not frequently mentioned in the Dīwān, a typical usage is found in 1.794, where the mandūb's arrow is like the iron-beaked eagle which slays the enemy; thus is stressed the strength and deadliness of the eagle. Also it should be noted

that the bird has royal attributes, for in this case it is compared to the arrow of a king, *Ṭughānshāh*. Its size in l.87 is contrasted by implication with that of a small bird, the *sa'va*.

### Elephant

It is likely that Azraqī, like many of his contemporaries was acquainted with the elephant through literature (21), and through the use of this beast as an arm of the military. In the *Dīvān* it is found in the context of the war-elephant. Its great strength impresses itself upon the imagination of our poet: in l.1906, he speaks of its mighty neck and thighs, in l.506 it is huge like a mountain. Azraqī speaks of its mighty charge, as in l.446, which is so terrifying that it makes the lion assume the form of the vixen, and in l.468, he speaks of the tumult - *dārūgīr* - of the elephants of the camp. Yet in spite of its terrifying charge and strength, it is slow-moving and does not possess the dexterity of the lion, as is indicated in l.506:

ولیکن گاه کوششی بردارند      دوال از پیل فرید نیز لاف

"But at the time of battle the lean lion tears the hide/  
skin from the elephant."

It is interesting that Azraqī should refer to this tactical drawback of the elephant's martial capability.

Nevertheless the elephant in this role must have been awe-inspiring and so memorable that *Ṭughānshāh* had pictures of war elephants embellishing his palace as this *misrā'* shows,

1.283:

بصفت درون سیکر پیل جنگی

"On the suffas, pictures of war elephants....."

# Falcon

Although Tughān as in Tughānshāh means falcon, the poet makes no use of it for punning.

This bird of prey, bāz, is apparently a generic term for a number of different types, of which the best hunters were the white ones (22), and indeed Azraqī refers to the hunting of the white falcon in 1.155 and the same species is again mentioned in 1.1129. The merciless nature of the bird and the ferocity of its talons is pointed out in 1.855, where the plain (sahra) is its habitat:

ز امن و عدل تو بصحرای ازلی دانه چیدن      مخرب باز فرو ریزد و روید منقار

"Through your (mamdūh's) security and justice, the talons of the falcon in the desert fall away and its beak grows to pick up seeds."

Another usage employed by Azraqī must be mentioned. In 1.1129 and 1.155, the white falcon is found in the company of the owl (jughd). However, they are contrasted with one another, the owl being regarded as treacherous in 1.1129, and in 1.155; as elsewhere in Persian literature, it is thought of as a bad omen in contrast to the falcon; 1.155:

و گریه جغد هو باز سپید صید کند      ز باز و جغد که فال مرثبت صید است

"Although the owl hunts like the white falcon, as an omen there

is a difference apparent between the owl and the falcon."

### Fox

The part that the fox, rūbāh, plays in Azraqī's poems is that of a timid animal (23). More especially we find that it is contrasted with the power and majesty of the lion, as in lls.1906, 747, 854. Usually it is by the power of the patron's nature that the character of the fox is transformed so that it can face the ferocity of the lion, as in l.1180. It is always the timidity or shyness of the creature that is axiomatic; there is no suggestion of that craftiness with which it is associated in our literature.

On one occasion Azraqī tells us something about the behaviour of the fox, which may be based upon actual observation, l.2198.

چنان شدت ز نرگا که موی خود از پوست بی باغن و دندان جدا کند رو به

"Such is the heat that the fox with its nails and teeth pulls out the hair from its skin."

This line is found in a tashbīb, describing a hot time of the year.

### Ghurm

This animal, translated by Steingass as a mountain-sheep or a horned fighting-ram, is mentioned in l.796, where it is hunted by Tughānshāh for its leather (charm) (24).

### Gnat

The pashsha is mentioned in l.87 in a husn-i maqta':

Until the gnat tears the back and mane of the lion..." Not only is the poet stating what is for him a well-established and

common fact, but the size and respective strength of the two creatures is contrasted (25).

#### Goat

Azraqī regards the goat as a humble animal and the concern of the poor, as this unpretentious line illustrates, l.1157:

من بیچاره را چه باید کرد      که بهارم بخانه دو بز شک

"For a wretch like me what is to be done, for at home I do not have two lame goats."

#### Gunjishk

This bird, which we may translate as the sparrow, is found in line 856, where the justice of the patron is such that it can make its nest in the eye of a snake. The usual smallness and weakness of the bird is here alluded to.

#### Gur

The famous wild ass is mentioned in l.1844 where it is associated with the plain (dasht), and in the company of other animals is hunted by the king.

#### Hayūn

This animal which probably indicates the dromedary, in l.304 is regarded as having an admirable form.

#### Jackal

The shikāl from the context of l.1243 moves coweringly in a craven manner.

#### Khārpusht

The khārpusht, hedgehog, occurs in lls.745, 1245, 2044. The

aspect of the creature with which Azraqī is most concerned is that it can withdraw its head within itself for protection, as is clearly seen from l.1245:

مخالف تو اگر تیر در کمان راند      هو خارپست سر اندر کشد بتر نصال

"If your enemy should put an arrow to his bow, the arrow-head like a hedgehog would withdraw into the arrow."

### Kulang

The crane, kulang, is mentioned in l.2010 and it records an observation of a sight the poet might well have seen himself during the spring (26).

اندر هوا قطار فروزان کشد سین      هوش بر طریق تنگ یکی گشت کایوان

"See in the sky the crying flights of cranes, like a numerous caravan on a narrow road."

### Lion

The lion is probably the commonest of the animals found in the Dīvān. Azraqī usually uses the Persian word shīr, as well as denoting it by Arabic terms such as hizabr and ghaḥānfar. Of course, the lion has been used for centuries as a symbol of power and majesty, and it is these very characteristics with which Azraqī most concerns himself. He makes no use of Arslān (lion in Turkish) although it is the name of Tughānshāh's father. In Nuzhat al Qulūb, we find the matter put succinctly: "He is the most powerful and terrible and majestic of the beasts of prey ..... When the lion



kills his prey he eats its heart and some of the other parts, and leaves the rest, and does not return to his half-eaten meal; he does no injury to a menstruous woman; and any animal that approaches him with submission he neither pursues nor injures; he is jealous of the female. And these qualities are those of kings; therefore he is called the King of Beasts." (27) Obviously this is the animal that the poet uses most often in images pertaining to his royal patrons.

Although the lion was found in Persia until very recent times, and there is the possibility that Azraqī may even have seen one, we must assume that his acquaintance with it is based on literary tradition (28).

On several occasions the poet mentions the power and ferocity of the lion. We have already pointed this out above, as in the section dealing with the fox, where the weak and timid nature of this animal is contrasted with that of the lion. The power of the lion - zūr-i ghaẓanfar - is also cited in l.304. Also from lls.505-6 we are told how the lean lion in battle is more dextrous than the fat elephant.

Being fierce and powerful, we find the lion mentioned in the context of battle with a view to the greater glorification and praise of the mamdūh; a typical example is found in l.68, where although the enemy is the lion, it is no match for the mamdūh:

وگر ندوی وی اندر دو چشم نیز نور      دودست رگ در آید بچشم نیز چو خواب

٢٥

"Were his enemy<sup>to</sup> in the two eyes of the lion, the two hands of death would enter the lion's eyes like sleep."

Other examples where the lion is found in a martial context may be seen in lls.298 and 1771-2.

Also in the martial context we find that the lion is used as a blazon on the king's flag, as in 1.1236, 1.727 and the following, 1.793, which also involves the zodiac sign of Leo the Lion:

بزار! بر سر سحرای خون فواید ز شیر رایت تو شیر آستان زنهار

"More than a thousand times every moment, the Lion in heaven seeks protection from the lion of your banner."

In each of the lines that we have cited as having the lion as an heraldic emblem, the mamdūh of the poem is Tughānshāh, (but this is not always so; see below 'Kingship and the Virtues of Kings'). This might suggest the lion is the particular emblem of this patron; however, we also find the suggestion that this very king's enemy also had a similar blazon, 1.1243:

چنان گریزد دشمن که شیر رایت او ز بهت تو جنبه گر بگل شگل

"The enemy flees such that the lion of his banner does not move from dread of you except like a jackal."

In the foregoing examples the majesty and regal nature of the lion is implied as being in the nature of the king. Other lines which reinforce this are, for example, 1.608, and 1.451, where Tughānshāh is described as shīr-shikar.

# Nahang

The two more important meanings of nahang are crocodile and shark. The former is the meaning found in Nuzhat al Qulūb (29); however it is clear from Ṭūsī's discussion of pearl-divers and the hazards that face them that his nahang is the shark (30). When Azraqī refers to the nahang, which creature does he have in mind? Most likely Azraqī had never actually seen either and is merely indicating a terrible, deadly beast of the waters.

The deadly nature of the nahang is clearly shown in l.1234, where it is also the image of a sword:

ز روی تیغ نو اندر دو چشم دشمن تو      دهان گشاده نمایه نهنگ مرگ اقبال

"In the two eyes of your enemy from the surface of your sword the death-inciting nahang holds its mouth open."

On two occasions we find the deadly nahang associated with the shell and its pearl, in lls.1189 and 1239. In both lines, because of the fear inspired by the creature, the shell and/or its pearl are consumed by the nahang. As Ṭūsī refers to sharks among the pearl-beds, it seems that it is the shark that our poet has in mind. Elsewhere the nahang hides its head like a hedgehog in protection in fear of the mamdūh (1.745), and the patron's horse dives into the seas like a nahang (1.1275). In both lines the words used for sea are daryā and bihār respectively; here we are faced with an ambiguity as to whether it is really the sea that is intended or a wide stretch of water, such as a lake or great river. In view of the lack of further evidence the safest course may be to regard the nahang as a ferocious aquatic animal. (31)

### Nightingale

The nightingale is one of the commoner birds that are found in the Dīwān. It is usually called bulbul, also 'andalīb and zand-wafī in 1.333. Its use is conventional; it is the bird that signifies the lover of the rose during the spring-time, as in 1.330, 1.333, 1.754 and 1.775. The other aspect of the nightingale which the poet expresses is its song, as in 1.915, and implicitly in 1.1395:

رز حادّه عندییب طبعم      ی نطق بمانه لال و اکسم

"Through the vicissitude of time (?), the nightingale of my nature remained inarticulate, dumb and voiceless."

### Ostrich

The ostrich is mentioned in 1.573 and is called na'ama. The line tells us that whereas the food of the parrot is sugar that of the ostrich is embers (akhgar). Here it seems that Azraqī is referring to popular contemporary tradition. He is supported in this by Mustawfī, who says that the ostrich 'eats fire, and sand, and stones, and receives no injury thereby.' (32).

### Owl

We have already had occasion to mention the owl, jughd when considering the falcon. Although a hunter, it, the owl, was associated with misfortune. This traditional, sinister aspect of the owl is further emphasised in 1.1297, where it is linked with ruins (33).

### Palang

This animal is usually considered to be the leopard. Azraqī

provides sufficient information to substantiate this. In 1.1153 he speaks of its colourful back, and in 1.1175 states that its back is black and yellow. Of its other characteristics, we learn that like the horse of the mamduh it canters about the mountains (1.1275). Being powerful and ferocious it is an animal that is used similarly to the lion. Thus we find implications of its bravery, as in 11s.291 and 1771-2. Like the lion it is also used as a blazon, as can be seen from 1.1236:

پلنگ و شیر بجنبند بر هلال علم  
تن از نسیم یابی و جان ز بار سحر

"Leopard and lion quiver on the crescent banner, bodies of Yamanī woven cloth, souls from the north wind."

Lines 2250 and 726 also contain the suggestion that through some aspect of the king's nature the leopard sheds its skin like a snake; the former also specifies the leopard in question as being the palang-i barbarī. (34).

#### Parrot

The parrot, tūtī, is one of the commoner birds that occur in the Dīvān. Essentially it figures as a brightly coloured bird that is associated with the spring, e.g. 1.339. We also have references to it eating what appears to be its favourite food: sugar, in 11s.339 and 573. Its ability to speak is mentioned in 1.154.

#### Partridge

The partridge is mentioned in 1.1603, as kabg. It is a bird of the spring, here making melody beneath the cypress and playing

the harp - naghma-yi kabgān-i rūdzan. Mustawfī describes it as

'a beautiful bird, with graceful march and sweet song' (35).

Azraqī also mentions the kabg-i darī in l.2326, noting that it is very gracious in its walk. Again Mustawfī mentions this bird as being a larger variety of partridge (36).

### Peacock

The peacock, which is called tāvūs is used conventionally by Azraqī (37). It is the obvious and splendid plumage of the bird with which he concerns himself, as in lls.599 and 323, where the colours of its feathers recall to the poet the colours of the spring-time. Although its plumage is so splendid the poet contrasts it with the ugliness of its feet, as in l.789 and in the following, l.326, which also involves the season of spring:

ورستار گلستان چو پای طاووس شد  
ماکم در ماهی بنای اندر کف طاووس پر

"Although the shoots of the garden have become like the foot of the peacock, in less than a month the peacock shall draw its feathers about its feet

### Sār

This bird, the starling, is mentioned in l.771. The form of the tulip is said to be like the musky back of the starling and reference is also made to the marks (nugthā) on its back. Both these remarks fit well with the features of the bird. The line forms part of a description of spring and to mention the sār here is appropriate for Mustawfī tells us that it comes to Iran in the spring (38).

Sa'va

This bird, which Steingass gives as ' a hen-sparrow with a red head, a finch', is found in 1.87. We learn merely that it flies.

Shāhīn

The shāhīn is the royal falcon or gerfalcon. As a well-known bird of prey, Azraqī refers to its speed, 1.304; its beak and talons prey on the pigeon (kabūtar), a fact substantiated by Mustawfī (39), 1.1565. Azraqī also refers to the eyes of this bird; in 1.211 they put tears in the eye of Gemini because of their brightness (40), and in 1.8, during spring storms, the air becomes like the eye (dida) of the royal falcon. One assumes that Azraqī believes its eye to be watery (?).

Shārak

In 1.154, this bird is said to be able to speak like the parrot. It may be the veryah bird (41).

Snake

The snake is quite frequently mentioned in the Dīvān, on at least a dozen occasions (42). It is called mār and af'ā (af'ī in Modern Persian). The poet employs the shape of the snake in various similes; for example in 1.59, in spring the black, swift, turning clouds are like snakes, their mouths full of fire and water, the latter point probably referring to poison, a fact noted in 1.608. The danger the snake may pose is mentioned in 1.856 and in 1.1640, where the anger of the mamduh can induce sleep in it. In both lines the danger of the snake lies in its eyes. This notion probably arises from the popular belief that some snakes, the worst, could

kill a man by a mere glance (43).

The poet also mentions in lls.726 and 2250 how the snake sheds its skin.

In l.769-70, Azraqī also draws our attention to the popular contemporary belief, that in the head of the snake was a stone (44). However he does not have occasion to credit it with any of the usual magical properties.

Both the fear of the snake and its form make it suitable for use in images of war. The patron's spear is snake-like in form as well as deadly in nature, l.679; and in l.1854 at the thought of the lord's snake-like spear the kernel and ~~taps~~ (tarak) of the enemy's bones become snake and serpent.

#### Sūsmār

The lizard is mentioned in lls.1788 and 599. The colour of its back interests the poet, in the former line it is golden and in the latter it is shiny, starry and dewy.

#### Whale

This, as vāl, is mentioned in l.1220 and l.1340. In the latter it seems that its size is alluded to, for in a war scene we are told that the horse becomes a ship, the attack the power of the wave, the plain the sea and the sword in it the māhī-yi vāl. The acceptance of the whale as a fish is also emphasised in l.1220, where we learn that its scales (sic) are softened by warm water.

#### Wolf

The gurg is found in l.2064 where it is a threat to the herd.



Yūz

This animal which may be the cheeta (45), or according to Steingass a small panther or ounce, occurs in 1.1143. This poem is on the theme of winter, and as such the head of the yūz becomes fair (zar) like the head of Zāl. This suggests that rather than the cheeta, another animal of the cat family such as the ounce is intended, an animal variously identified as the lynx or snow leopard, which latter definition would suit our purpose.

Zaghan

This bird, which Stephenson translates as kite (46), occurs in 1.1609. We learn that it steals carrion.

(Mythological animals, such as the 'anqā, simurgh and dragon will be dealt with elsewhere.)

We have had occasion to deal with more than forty creatures as found in the qaṣā'id. Animals form the larger part of the repertoire, followed by birds and there is also mention of the fish, the val. There is also a large range in the size of the creatures, from the ant to huge beasts such as the elephant. It is clear that since the Dīvān by contemporary standards is not to be thought of as particularly large, the animal kingdom occupied a not inconsiderable part of the poetic imagination.

It is a problem ~~to attempt~~ to decide the extent to which the creatures mentioned by Azraqī are part of his poetic imagination and to what extent they constitute knowledge gained from actual observation or experience. The animals, insects, birds, etc. which he concerns himself with may well have been seen first hand; he may

have seen elephants in the army, lions in the mountains and wild asses in the plain. On the other hand it is difficult, although not completely unreasonable, to see how he could have been acquainted with creatures such as the whale or even the nahang. It is more likely that his knowledge of some of the more exotic creatures - if not most - is derived from the literary tradition of his own era.

This last point is reinforced by the fact that in the use of animals in his imagery, Azraqī gives them a stereotyped function. One animal or bird comes to stand for one particular thing or characteristic. Thus the lion is always a symbol of fierceness and strength, likewise the leopard; the fox, however, is timid and cowardly. Azraqī makes obvious use of such aspects when praising his patron or denigrating his patron's enemy. Creatures with characteristics such as these are to be found almost exclusively in the madh.

On the other hand there is a large number of creatures, mainly birds, that are associated with the spring; where else could we expect to find the nightingale except in the company of the spring-time rose, or other birds such as the dove or partridge except in the garden at Nawrūz? Especially with regard to those animals and birds that are mentioned in the tashbīb is it difficult for us to assume here we have the result of the poet's own observations. Their use is so conventionalised by literary tradition that he need never have seen a nightingale or any of the other birds and animals found in the tashbīb.

Only rarely is it that the poet is describing something original and not conventionalised. His innovation is not the repertoire of creatures but the information and allusions to them in poetry (47).

Yet even the description of the charming, timid behaviour of the durraj is, as we have seen from Mustawfī, well known to be characteristic of the bird.

The debt in which Azraqī stands to his own literary tradition is reinforced at every point. Of the animals that might be thought of as common, household animals, the only one with which he really concerns himself is the goat; he does not concern himself with such animals mainly because it would limit the aims of his imagery, which are mainly to picture the delight, promise and pleasure of the spring in the tashbīb, and to praise outlandishly the mamdūh in the madh.

It should also be noted, if only to stress once again the importance of literary tradition, that Azraqī mentions a number of contemporary, and possibly still prevalent, popular beliefs concerning certain animals. We may draw attention to what he has to say about the ostrich, the way it eats embers, or the deadly power that the snake possesses in its eyes; there is also the association of misfortune inherent in the owl. Westerners and the educated may today scoff at such ideas, but it by no means diminishes the realities that such facts held for Azraqī and his contemporaries.

The assumption may fairly be drawn that since the way various creatures are portrayed in the Dīvān reveal a convention imposed by the genre, the poet has no need to revert to his actual experience. The creatures involved become first of all a series of labels, used to indicate a particular season or a facet of human behaviour. Thus certain animals in time come to be equated with certain things; a simple example is that Steingass gives as an alternative meaning for nahang a sword; the nightingale may stand for the impassioned

lover. It may be that the poet is not seeing the particular animal that the word represents primarily, but rather its secondary meaning. The poet may even be isolated from the environment of nature. He may make no attempt to see animals for what they are; he may choose to see the lion only as a pseudonym for bravery or ferocity, and thus as only another adjective to apply to his patron. The animal world may tend to become merely part of the backdrop of the spring or a convenient way to add lustre to the praise of his master.

It is easy to judge a poet such as Azraqī harshly, by our own norms, for showing little originality and following slavishly the precedents imposed by the conventions of the genre. Even if his images are often more imaginative than his contemporaries he still works in the same themes. Nevertheless the genre and manner in which he wrote must have been welcomed by its audiences and appreciated; to what else can we attribute the genre's popularity. Rather than view a poet such as Azraqī as spending his time trying to breathe new life into the dead bones of convention, we may do better to realise that he is here manipulating not so much a sterile convention but rather an alternative vocabulary.

ANIMAL KINGDOM - NOTES

- 1) Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī, Nuzhat al Qulūb, the Zoological Section, translated by J. Stephenson, Oriental Translation Fund, New Series, vol.XXX, R.A.S. 1928, p.27.
- 2) c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.155.
- 3) " " " " " p.223.
- 4) Stephenson, p.74.
- 5) ibid. p.81 and text p.114.
- 6) ibid. p.xviii.
- 7) c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.147.
- 8) Dīwān-i 'Uthmān Mukhtārī, p.84 note.
- 9) Haim, Shorter Persian-English Dictionary, Tehran 1967.
- 10) Stephenson, p.25 and text p.36.
- 11) ibid. p.20.
- 12) ibid. p.19 and n.4, text p.28.
- 13) ibid, see p.20 for the Medieval ideas on the matter.
- 14) c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.142 and p.149.
- 15) Stephenson, p.86 and text p.119; n.b. p.86 n.1 points out that there are six species of dove (including the wood-pigeon) in the fauna of Iraq.
- 16) ibid, p.68, text p.97; and for wood-pigeon p.93, text p.127.  
In n.2, p.93, the translator also points out that it may be rendered 'turtle-dove'; this presumably refers to the Arabic

warashān as well as the Persian. He also says that it may be eaten; the text reads nā ma'kūl al lahm; in view of the subsequent statements in the notice, the text is erroneous.

- 17) *ibid*, p.71.
- 18) Read khāshā for sayd, 'Abd al Rasūlī, p.18.
- 19) In contrast with the conventional usage, De Fouchécour p.148, Azraqī would seem to know more about this bird.
- 20) Stephenson *loc.cit*.
- 21) c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.158-9.
- 22) Stephenson, p.63, text 89.
- 23) c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.155.
- 24) " " " " " p.155.
- 25) *ibid*.
- 26) *ibid*. p.149.
- 27) Stephenson, p.27.
- 28) c.f. conventional usage De Fouchécour, p.150-1.
- 29) Stephenson, p.51.
- 30) Ṭūsī, pp. 85-6.
- 31) c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.156; Azraqī would seem to be better informed.
- 32) Stephenson, p.91; c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour p.150, again Azraqī would seem to be better informed.
- 33) c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.147.
- 34) Mustawfī, p.227, Barbar is located on the west coast of the Red Sea. The shedding of its skin may be a poetic conceit but the closeness of the leopard and the snake is pointed out in Stephenson, p.35.  
c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.152.

- 35) Stephenson, p.83; c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.145.
- 36) Stephenson loc.cit.; see also A. S. Beveridge, Bāburnāma in English, London 1969, Appendix N, xiviii-ix, for discussion of this bird and the Himalayan snow-cock and the meaning of dari etc.
- 37) c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.144 and p.200.
- 38) Stephenson, p.75.
- 39) ibid. p.76.
- 40) c.f. the usage of Manuchihrī in De Fouchécour p.147.
- 41) I owe this suggestion to Mr. Simon Digby; see also De Fouchécour p. 148.
- 42) c.f. conventional usage, De Fouchécour, p.154; Azraqī again shows a greater knowledge of this creature.
- 43) Stephenson p.39.
- 44) Ṭūsī, p.142, where its magical properties are also mentioned.
- 45) Stephenson, p.47 of the text.
- 46) ibid. p.67 and text p.96.
- 47) By comparison with De Fouchécour's lists this is the case.  
He also says of Azraqī's usage of animals: "(il) donne peu de place aux animaux et il ne les décrit pas" (p.221). This can hardly be regarded as a just statement.

- 8 -

AZRAQĪ'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD

In the Dīvān Azraqī mentions a number of places, areas and geographical features. Often these places, areas etc., are given certain attributes; we learn that they are famed for certain products or are renowned for certain features. Here we shall examine the poet's knowledge of the world about him.

Essentially we know nothing of Azraqī's own experience of the world outside his own city of Herat. We cannot say whether he ever had the opportunity to travel any distance from Khurāsān. However of the places he mentions by name, it is rare that he mentions places within Persia; usually he mentions distant lands and places, 'far-away places with strange-sounding names'. Even if he did not gain his knowledge of these places by seeing them for himself or by discussion with those who had, it is clear that he must have relied upon traditional geographies of his time or upon other poets who by employing a similar theme, set a precedent for the genre.

To the north-east of Khurāsān, beyond Transoxiana, lay the vast steppes of Central Asia, which during the Middle Ages was the home of many nomadic tribes. At our period the most important of these were the various tribes of Turks, who in Azraqī's time had come to hold political sway in the lands of the east of Islam. Azraqī



mentions two of these areas in l.20:

وگر از خلق و ریخا ز اورا بندگاندی جهان نشاندی خلق ملک نشاندی ریخا

"If there were not slaves for him (Tughānshāh) from Khullakh and Yaghmā, the world would not recognise Khullakh, the firmament would not praise Yaghmā."

Mustawfī mentions the Khullakh, which Le Strange reads as Khalakh, amongst Turkish tribes in the territories of Tarsiyan and Uighur, and the editor adds that they were a tribe famous for their beauty (1). Closer in time to our poet was the author of Hudūd al 'Ālam, of the late tenth century; the tribe is also mentioned here in some detail and Minorsky in his commentary identifies them as the Qarluq, placing their lands to the east of modern Tashkent (2). The Yaghmā are also mentioned as lying to the east of the Khallukh (3). Azraqī's suggestion that these regions produced slaves is strengthened by Le Strange's reference to their beauty; nor should we forget that the founder of the Ghaznavids, Sebuk-Tegin, also probably originated from this part of the world (4).

Another place in what is for us remote Central Asia mentioned in the Dīvān is Khutan. It is mentioned at least three times. In l.2120, the reference is to the land of Khutan - shahr-i Khutan; in line, l.1584, and the following l.1626, p.64 we find the common denominator of musk:

ز آرنوی زلف مشکین تو ای سیمین کرین مشک سراسازد از خون ناف آلودر فتن

"From the desire of your musky locks, O horse with white buttocks, the navel of the deer in Khutan makes pure musk from blood."

The fame of the quality of the musk from the deer of Khutan is stressed by Mustawfī (5). The author of Hudūd al 'Ālam is acquainted with the town, and places it on the boundary of China and Tibet (6). The town on modern maps is to be found in Chinese Sinkiang.

In l.1613, p.64, Tibet is also mentioned. Like Khutan, Azraqī refers to the musk found there which perfumes the tresses of the beloved. The musk of Tibet is mentioned in both the Hudūd al 'Ālam (7) and the zoological section of the Nuzhat al Qulūb, where we learn that although the musk of Khutan is the best, that of Tibet is more often met with.

Of places more distant than Tibet and Khutan, Azraqī knows Khitā. This is the word anglicized to Cathay, which was applied to China during the Middle Ages and even Modern Times. However, it is unlikely that it signified the whole of China for our poet and his audience. That it is located far to the east is evident from l.1619; rather than the whole of China, Khitā for the Muslim geographers means Northern China (9). The name appears to be derived from the tribe K'itan who united Northern China and Mongolia after about 917 A.D. (10). Speaking of 'Awfī's understanding of the term Khitāy in the sixth century of the Hijra, Barthold says that he 'must have understood not the whole of China (as in modern times), but at most only the country of the Khitāy, who were at that time ruling in the northern part of the Middle Kingdom, or more probably the empire of the Qare-Khitāy or Western Liao'. (11).

Azraqī himself tells us a little more about the Khitā in lls.1584-5;

in describing the beloved, he refers to the naqsh-i Khitā, the pictures of Khitā. None of the sources we have consulted attribute to Cathay fame for its pictures or paintings. However, Mustawfī, in his notice on China (Chīn) says 'the population for the most part worship idols (being Manicheans) of the sect of Mānī the Painter' (12). This may explain Azraqī's verses.

Chīn is also mentioned by the poet, in the following, 1.1178:

بدان لبیب که در بندگان زمین آید      شب مردم رویه بخد چین سرتنگ

"Because they bring him (mandūh) slaves from Chīn, on the borders of Chīn grows the mandrake in the form of men."

We have drawn attention to this line previously when dealing with vegetation. We drew attention to the areas where the mandrake was known to be found and it was not China proper but rather Central Asia once again that seemed to be intended. Another factor which must make us think carefully about what the poet understood by the term Chīn, is that Azraqī speaks of slaves from this place. As we have already pointed out above the Turkish tribes to the north and north-east of the lands of Islam were a favourite source for slaves not China. Perhaps by hadd-i chīn Azraqī is intending no more than to indicate a distant, powerful land in Central Asia. Minorsky, commenting on Hudūd al 'Ālam, draws our attention to the vagueness of the Muslim geographers in this region; the Hudūd al 'Ālam itself is shown to be best acquainted with the Tarim basin and Kan-su (13).

It is clear that when he mentions distant places in Central Asia, Azraqī is in terra incognita. His knowledge is traditional and

imprecise. When dealing with places that are nearer to him in distance, his knowledge does not increase proportionately. Rather he still relies on tradition and gives places their stock attributes. A good example is found in lls.706-7; where four places are cited with their respective attributes:

بخام سوی من که ز بهر ضام تو      بستم هزار قبه ز کشمیر و قندهار  
با نخهای جامه زیبای شوشتر      با عقدای نوبو دریا زنگبار

"Walk graciously towards me, for the sake of your gracious walk I threw up a thousand domes from Kashmīr and Qandahār with daises covered with brocade from Shushtar with strings of pearls from the sea of Zangibār."

This example mentions places that are very far apart and each has an exotic speciality. Pearls are associated in this case with Zangibār. The name means the coast of Zang, the modern name being Zanzibar. For Muslims the term included the whole of the eastern coast of Africa known to them (14).

In contrast to the African coast and its pearls, Azraqī also refers to a town in Persia, Shushtar. It was here that dībā, brocade, was manufactured, a material to which the town owed considerable fame (15), (also see below).

The other line of the example mentions the domes of Kashmīr and Qandahār. This refers to idol-temples. On the subject of Kashmīr, the Hudūd al 'Ālam says: 'Qashmīr is a large and pleasant

land (shahr) ..... It possesses many idol-temples to which the Hindus come on pilgrimage.' (16). Qandahār is also mentioned in 1.755, where in the spring-time the plain (ṣahrā) reveals a temple (naw-bahār) like Qandahār. Our tenth century geographer says of this place: 'a large town in which there are numerous idols of gold and silver. It is a place of hermits and brahmans' (17). However, what must be pointed out at once is that this is a place totally different from its Muslim namesakes in modern Afghanistan and the Punjab. This must be the town Azraqī is referring to here; Le Strange supports this when he draws attention to the fact that during most of the period the town in Afghanistan is not to be found in the geographies (18). The town with its idols and no doubt gubbās is a locality in India, its Indian name being Ghandhār; it stood in the eastern corner of the Gulf of Cambay (19). Thus when he refers to Kashmīr and Qandahār, Azraqī has in mind two towns renowned for their idols, which is appropriate for the tashbīb he has in hand.

As well as referring to numerous localities in the Dīvān, we also find that Azraqī often mentions personages associated with particular locales. This usually takes the form of the title of the monarch of a foreign land. It should be noted that Azraqī, when speaking of such kings to praise his own, never includes the Saljuq sultān or the caliph; he usually refers to infidels. In 1.822, four such foreign kings are mentioned in the same line:

غلام و چاکر و فرمانبر و رعی بادت      مملکت اندر مغفور و رای و قیصر و شہر

"May Faghfur, Rāy, Qaysar and Shār be your slave, servant (etc.) in your kingdom."

Qaysar is, of course, the Arabic form of Caesar and signifies the king of Rūm, the Byzantine emperor. In apposition to Caesar as king of the lands in the west, stands Faghfūr who is the king of China (wherever that may be; see above) (20). Also situated in the east is the realm of Rāy which is the Persian for Raja. What exactly Azraqī understands by this term, whether he has anyone in particular in mind, we are unable to say. With the title Shār, Azraqī is much closer to his own world. The Shār was the chief of the district of Gharchistān, which corresponds today to the area of Fīrūz-kūh in Afghanistan. The Shārs were vassals of the Sāmānids and later submitted to Maḥmūd of Ghaznī; from their names it is clear that they were Muslims, which is an exception to the normal practise followed by Azraqī in his usage of these titles (21). This may be expediency as this title is also the rhyming word in the line; also it does not seem likely that they were regarded as being powerful and certainly not on a par with the others mentioned in the same line.

The Dīvān also refers to Rāy in l.1869, where we also find the Khān of the Turks. From the evidence provided by the text it is not possible to decide what ruler the poet has in mind. He is probably referring to the Qarakhānids (or perhaps a more distant branch of the Turks).

Of the lands that lie to the west there is Rūm under the rule of Qaysar. Another area which is often mentioned is that of Bulghār. It is mentioned in lls.1176, 1186, 1850 and 1919. With the exception of the last-mentioned line, Bulghār is always seen in apposition to Hind (or Hindūstān). As India is in the east, it is clear that

Azraqī uses Bulghār to indicate a land far to the west; in l.1919, Bulghār is in the west (implicit in the hyperbole), but is this time contrasted with 'Uman'. It may be that as 'Uman' is in the south, Azraqī is implying that Bulghār is not only in the west but also to the north. Where is it that Azraqī and his contemporaries believed Bulghār to be situated? Doubtless only a vague direction could be indicated; Azraqī's verse certainly throws no light on the matter. Mustawfī places Bulghār to the east of the Caspian Sea and Le Strange notes that Bulghār, Great Bulgaria, was situated on the left bank of the Volga (22). Minorsky commenting on the references to Inner Bulghār and Great Bulghār in the Hudūd al 'Ālam says that very little is known about Eastern Europe; however, his map of the area does place Bulghār in much the same position as Le Strange, although on the other side of the Volga (23).

In l.1186, when praising the power of his patron from Hind to Bulghār, Azraqī also adds 'from Rūm to Kīrang'. Rūm we are familiar with and Kīrang may be that town in the neighbourhood of Marv (24) by which the poet aims to stress the other end of the world from Byzantium.

In the Dīvān we also find mentioned a number of places that lie within the Muslim world. In l.17 are mentioned the towns of Basra and Mecca, Tā'if, which stands close to Mecca and is its granary (25), and Baṭḥā, which is also in the neighbourhood of Mecca (26); l.1933 includes Baghdād, Shām (Syria) and Iṣfahān (Sipahān) as well as Rūm. Line 30 even mentions Lahsā.

The fame of many places rests on their products or specialities like Shushtar and its brocade. Shām is renowned for crystal (glass?), 1.1632, p.64, 'Uman for its pearls, 1.14, and in the same line, San'a for its pictures (naqsh-i dīda-yi San'a).

As well as towns and districts the Caspian Sea and the Qulzum are mentioned. The Caspian occurs in 1.1598, p.65, where its breadth is emphasised. In this instance it is called Āsgūn. The Qulzum is found in 1.1351 and 1687, where its size is implicit. Strictly speaking this is the Red Sea; however, Mustawfī draws our attention to the fact that it was vulgarly applied also to the Caspian (27). We can only hazard a guess as to what Azraqī has in mind.

On those occasions that he refers to Qulzum, the other half of the line includes the mountain of Sablān (28). This is a high mountain in the region of Ardibīl; it is 16,800 ft., in height (29).

So far we have concerned ourselves with places and districts that are distant and very foreign from Azraqī and his own area of Herat; even those places <sup>to which</sup> ~~that~~ we have referred ~~to~~, which are within the Muslim world may nevertheless be considered as outside the immediate world with which Azraqī was acquainted. Hence his knowledge of these areas is not first-hand; however, they far outnumber places with which one might expect him to be familiar.

Of course Harī is frequently mentioned (e.g. 1.385). Balkh is also referred to in 1.421, where the poet says that on four occasions Tughānshāh was thwarted by fate from reaching this town. In another



poem in praise of Tughānshāh the scorching winds and difficulties of the road to Sarakhs are mentioned. Azraqī when praising Amīrānshāh draws our attention to that prince's exploits in Sīstān, as at the darband of Sajistān (l.466), and of his wars against the devil-faced Sagzīs in general in lls.492-3.

Mention is also made of the Farāh river, l.2185, the savad of Nishābūr, l.1472, and the wind of Khwārazm, in l.329 (30).

Azraqī's references to places beyond his immediate environment have two main functions. The first is to add an exoticism to his descriptions of the beloved or the spring-time in the tashbīh; ~~secondly~~ such places may be mentioned in the madh to praise outlandishly the extent of the patron's power and influence. If there is any emphasis with regard to the direction in which the poet casts his gaze, it is towards the east, due no doubt to historical and cultural reasons. However, the extent to which his knowledge is traditional and stereotyped suggests that the geographical knowledge of his day was static.

AZRAQĪ'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD - NOTES

- 1) Mustawfī, Nuzhat al Qulūb, Gibb Mem. Series ii, trans. by Le Strange, 1919; p.249 and n.5.
- 2) Hudūd al 'Ālam, trans. and commentary by V. Minorsky, Gibb Mem. New Series XI, 1970; p.97 and p.286, see Map V, p.279.
- 3) *ibid.* p.95, see Map V, p.279.
- 4) Cambridge History of Iran, vol. V.C.U.P. 1968, p.6. See also KaiKāūs Iskandar Qābūs-nāma, ed. Levy, London 1951, Chapter 23 for discussion of various qualities of slaves from different areas.
- 5) Mustawfī, *ibid.*, Zoological Section, trans. by J. Stephenson, Oriental Translation Fund, New Series vol.XXX, R.A.S. 1928, p.20.
- 6) Hudūd, p.85-6, Map IV, p.261.
- 7) *ibid.*, p.92.
- 8) Stephenson, *op.cit.*, p.20.
- 9) Mustawfī, *op.cit.*, p.250, n.7: Khita also rendered Khita.
- 10) Hudūd, p.282.
- 11) W. Barthold, Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasions, Gibb Mem. New Series V, 1968, p.17.
- 12) Mustawfī, *op.cit.*, p.250.
- 13) Hudūd, p.225-8.
- 14) *ibid.*, p.472.

- 15) Le Strange, Lands of the Eastern Caliphate, London, 1966, p.234-5.
- 16) Hudūd, p.92.
- 17) *ibid*, p.88.
- 18) Le Strange, *op.cit.*, p.347.
- 19) Hudūd, p.245.
- 20) *ibid*, p.84 and p.227.
- 21) *ibid*, p.105 and p.327-8.
- 22) Mustawfī, *op.cit.*, p.231 and p.252 n.3.
- 23) Hudūd, p.440 and Map X11, p.435.
- 24) Le Strange, *op.cit.*, p.400.
- 25) Mustawfī, *op.cit.*, p.2.
- 26) *ibid*. p.8.
- 27) *ibid*, p.227 and 231.
- 28) Hudūd, p.66, spelt Sabalān; Le Strange, *op.cit.*, p.163, spelt Sablān; n.b. our text reads Thablān (or even Thabalān).
- 29) Hudūd, p.202, the Savalān is 16800 ft. high.
- 30) C.f. Mamuchihrī, Dīvān, ed. Dabīrsiyāqī, Tehran, 1324, p.119:

فیزیو و فر آرید که هنگام خوانست      باد خشک از جانب خوارزم و زانت

- 9 -

SOME ITEMS OF LUXURY

As we have seen from our analysis of themes such as minerals and flowers, Azraqī is anxious in the tashbībs of his poems to create an atmosphere of opulence and richness. Flowers and jewels evoke a dimension of colour and brightness. Azraqī also stimulates other senses. One of the most noticeable is that of smell which is achieved not only by the perfumes of the flowers but also by the introduction of luxurious perfumes and smells. The whole atmosphere of luxury, which surrounds the world which the poet would have us believe he and his patron inhabit, is further enhanced by drawing our attention to fine fabrics and garments, and other luxury goods. These trappings of luxury are our concern here.

Amongst the perfumes mentioned in the Dīvān the most prominent is ambergris - 'anbar'. Ambergris is a wax-like substance, grey in colour, found floating in tropical seas and in the intestines of the sperm-whale, much used in perfumery. During the Middle Ages there was a difference of opinion among authorities as to its origin (1). Mustawfī tells us that it came from the sea and was not found in Iran (2); also much was obtained from the Karāram Isles (3) and the Persian Gulf where it was obtained from the belly of a fish, which was nevertheless inferior to that found on the sands, as it had

already lost much of its colour and perfume (4). In the Hudūd al 'Ālam ambergris is obtained from India (5), Rāmī (Sumatra) (6), and Santarem, the farthest town in Spain (7). Azraqī nowhere suggests that he is aware of its origin. However, his use of it in his imagery does suggest a conventional familiarity with it.

A typical usage is found in 1.208:

دخان ابر لؤلؤ بیز عیبرهای هر ساعت ز میثا برکشه بؤلؤ بشیل اندر دمه عیبر

"The mouth of the pearl-sifting, ambergris-scented cloud every moment draws up pearls from the mīnā, expires ambergris into nil."

Here the implication is that ambergris is a perfume, a sweet breath, whilst the cloud in colour and form may be thought to resemble the waxy texture of ambergris. The use of pearls to indicate rain-drops and the association with ambergris is not to be regarded as merely fortuitous; it seems that ambergris was familiar in the form of a grain or, even larger, in the shape of an egg. Thus we find the following misrā', 1.2156:

ز بوی زلفی بر باد بدیده عیبر . . . . .

"From the scent of her ringlets there are grains of amber in the wind....."

Azraqī continues to show an elaborate vocabulary with regard to 'anbar. Again when speaking of the beloved we find in 1.579:

عدوی عیبر و خضمه سلام گشتم از آنک سلام زنجش گرد گیرد از عیبر

"I became the enemy of ambergris and the foe of the shamāma for the shamāma of her chin (or dimple) is surrounded by ambergris."

Shamāma is perfumed pastile; it could be made of ambergris, although from this example it is not clear. Both of these last examples also reveal that the perfume was used on the person of the beloved (although the sex is not determined).

We may conclude this discussion of ambergris by noting l.335, where the wind spreads 'anbar and in the ambergris is 'abīr. The meaning of 'abīr is not clear. Steingass offers various interpretations; it may mean ambergris itself or any fragrant perfume, or some form of compound perfume (8).

Musk, mushk, ranks with ambergris as the most popular and important perfume in the Dīvān. We have already discussed its origins in the section on animals. From this it is clear that musk came from Asia. Its use was mainly confined to the hair of the beloved, although this may be misleading in as much that the beloved's hair is always ideally black and lustrous. The other 'musky' quality of its perfume completes its characteristics (e.g. l.1631-2, p.64).

As well as the last two mentioned perfumes, Azraqī also includes three other substances used as perfume: bān, ghāliya and 'ūd. Bān is a fine balsam obtained from the myrobalan tree; it is known in the West as benzoin or benjamin. It is found often in apposition to musk, as in l.1739 and l.2005; on both occasions it is part of a tashbīb; thus in the former, for example, the air at spring-time is perfumed and spiced with musk and benzoin (mu'aṭṭar-ast u muṭayyab havā bi-musk u bi-bān).

Like other perfumes, ghāliya is present in the descriptions of the spring or the beloved. This perfume would seem to be civet, a strong musky perfume obtained from the anal glands of the civet cat which is a carnivorous quadruped between the fox and weasel in size and appearance. During our period, Sarandīb (Ceylon) was a source for this creature (9). The following line suggests that its use was in the hair, l.828 (10).

از خم زلفش برگ سنی غالیه پوی  
سر زلفش برگ سمن غالیه بار

"From the twists of her tresses, her jasmine leaves/petals (i.e. the skin of the face) wear civet; the tips of her tresses are burdened with civet upon the petals of the jasmine."

This perfume was kept in a ghāliya-dān as referred to in l.1735; we are also told in this line that the container, which must have been a perfume bottle, resembles the form of a red lāla. (If we were sure of what the poet understood by this flower, we might have an idea of the shape of the ghāliya-dān).

Finally we may consider the aromatic wood 'ūd, aloes-wood. 'ūd was probably used in a perfuming vessel where it was placed when moistened and burnt with charcoal (11). Like the other perfumes mentioned by Azraqī, it is used to evoke a rich scent. A typical usage is found in l.337 where ambergris and the 'musky' wind are mentioned; as with ambergris, aloes in this line would seem to have been commonly used in small pellets (hubba). During this period one of the main sources for this wood would seem to be India and especially Qamarūn and Dahum where fresh aloes were to be found (12).

The Dīvān also makes mention of a number of cloths and textiles which are to be regarded as luxury stuffs. The commonest, and thus the most important for Azraqī, are the textiles called shūshtarī. The town of Shūshtar was famous for its brocades and silks from the Sasanian period (13). Although this town was the most famous for this type of textile, it was also produced elsewhere, for the governor of Khurāsān sent shūshtarī to Hārūn al Rashīd (14). For Azraqī it is a rich and colourful fabric, and he uses it to evoke as much in several tashbībs, as in 1.323, 1.2231 and 1.2327. Only in 1.707 does he actually refer to the town of Shūshtar and its famous brocade: dībā-yi shūshtar.

Dībāh, is a rich brocade, a similar cloth to dībā. (The final hā differentiating these words may have originated among the poets for purposes of rhyme). Like shūshtarī, it is found in several tashbībs to add colour and an air of opulence: 1.10, 1.2112, and 1.2156. In the following, the woven nature of the cloth recalls to the poet's mind the manner of composing verse, 1.644:

ای خاوند خاوندان ز یاد مدح تو در بهی باقم بجان اندر همی می بود و سار

"O lord of lords, in recalling your praise, I weave a brocade within my soul without warp and weft."

The exact nature of many of the fabrics that Azraqī mentions is not clear. He speaks of green silk (harīr-i sabz) in 1.2007 and to of parniyān in 1.1856 and 1.2014, where it is green. Parniyān is regarded as 'Chinese silk', and especially multi-coloured (15); however, it should not be thought that such silk actually came from China, as it



may indicate only the style of its intricacy. Also a large number of towns were known to produce silk in Persia during the Middle Ages and Tabriz is known to have produced one in the Chinese style (16).

Silk may also have been used in the mixed fabric called mulham (17), l.1780; it was also a brocade produced in Khurasan (18) and Khwarazm (19).

Another precious fabric mentioned by Azraqi is saglātūn, a brocade (20), either blue or multi-coloured (21), in l.331.

The poet refers to sinjāb in l.53, where it is the colour of the sky shrouded in mist (i.e. white); this is most probably ermine. Similarly, qāqum, also ermine (22) is mentioned as worn by the mandūh in l.512.

Finally with regard to luxury items, Azraqi on occasions refers to vessels of Shāmī (Syrian) glass, which was for long the most famous. In l.321 we find qārūra-yi shāmī, in l.1999 ābgīna-yi shāmī, and in l.1632, p.64, bulūr-i shāmī.

The various goods, fabric and perfumes to which we have drawn attention are nearly always to be found in the tashbīb. Here their purpose is to heighten the senses of the listener by rich perfumes and colour. At times Azraqi's use of them is very involved and the sense of the verse becomes swamped in colour and fragrance. Rather than find new mediums of expression, the poet is extending the conventional repertoire to its limits.

As he is writing for wealthy, often royal ~~to~~ patrons, reference to luxury items, which they would understand, is appropriate. Many

allusions would be lost on a poor, uneducated audience. This is also the case with other themes such as mention of strange places and lands, and possibly particular astrological allusions.

SOME ITEMS OF LUXURY - NOTES

- 1) Nuzhat al Qulūb, p.198.
- 2) ibid
- 3) ibid. p.225.
- 4) ibid. p.226 and Stephenson, p.54.
- 5) Hudūd al 'Ālam, p.86.
- 6) ibid. p.57.
- 7) ibid, p.156.
- 8) For its uses at a much later date in Egypt, see E. Lane, The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, London 1966, p.208.
- 9) Hudūd, p.61 (hayvān-i zabad).
- 10) See Lane, p.142, n.2.
- 11) See Lane, p.208.
- 12) Hudūd, p.87 and pp.86 and 91.
- 13) See also section on geographical knowledge, and P. Ackerman, Survey of Persian Art, V, Tokyo, 1964-5 pp.1996-7 and 2001.
- 14) Ackerman, p.1996.
- 15) Burhān-i Qāti'; also dībā-yi chīnī; see also W. B. Henning, Two Central Asian Words, Transactions of the Philological Society, 1945, pp.155-56.
- 16) Ackerman, p.1996.
- 17) " p.2026 and Burhān.

- 18) Ackerman, p.1996.
- 19) Barthold, p.235.
- 20) Ackerman, p.2026.
- 21) Burhān.
- 22) See Falakī-i Shirvānī, Divan, ed Hādī Ḥasan, R.A.S., London 1925  
p.37 n.17.

- 10 -

### THE PERSIAN EPOS

Elsewhere we have analysed a number of prominent themes that stand out in Azraqī's qasā'id. His employment and the ramifications of these themes showed little that may be considered as original; rather he follows the conventions and traditions of his age and the genre in which he writes. With respect to his use of imagery of the Persian epos, it is no surprise to find the same trait, for here he is more than ever dependent on literary and oral tradition. He incorporates figures that are mythical, legendary and semi-legendary; often such distinctions can hardly be said to be present. Firstly, we shall give our attention to what may be called 'the fabulous beasts'.

#### Fabulous Beasts

In Azraqī's Dīvān, two such imaginary beasts are encountered: the dragon and the Sīmurgh/'Anqā. The latter by its frequency is the more important. It seems clear that at one time the 'Anqā and Sīmurgh were two distinct creatures which later became synonymous. Eva Baer, in her work Sphinxes and Harpies in Medieval Islamic Art has outlined this process of assimilation. We learn that the earliest description of the 'Anqā is by al Mas'ūdī and is repeated by al Zamakhsharī, al 'Aufī and al Damīrī. It appears that God created male and female 'Anqā; along with their progeny, they proceeded to eat all and sundry. However, upon the appeals of a prophet, Khalīd b. Sinān al 'Absī, God cut off

their progeny and they became extinct. Alternatively, Abū al Baqā' al 'Ukbarī associates the 'Anqā with the people of al Rass in the Qur'ān; it would come and feed on a boy and girl, but in answer to the people's prayers God killed it with a thunderbolt. It is with al Jāhiz that we first meet the 'Anqā equated with the Sīmurgh of Persian legend, and this is an assimilation which grows with time. After the irruption of the Mongols it is iconographically associated with the form of the Chinese phoenix, (1). Mustawfī also translates 'Anqā by Sīmurgh and gives information about its longevity as well as some of the legends connected with it (2).

In Azraqī's qaṣā'id, Sīmurgh and 'Anqā are not wholly assimilated. Only on two occasions is there reason to suggest that they may be equated. Elsewhere they appear to retain separate attributes.

Both Sīmurgh and 'Anqā occur about half a dozen times each. The Sīmurgh is usually mentioned in its guise as the magical bird of the Shāhāma, who gave its feather to Zāl; armed with it, he and Rustam were able to effect all sorts of wonders (3); such allusions are found in lls.498, 501 and 48. In 1.741, the accuracy of the mandūh's arrow is assured by the feather of the Sīmurgh; in 1.1610, the battlements of the palace resemble the beaks of young Sīmurghs in their nest, which also infers that the nest of this beast is to be found in high and inaccessible places.

Azraqī's use of the 'Anqā maintains a separate set of characteristics. It is clearly a mighty and fabulous bird, but it is not clearly interchangeable with the Sīmurgh. Our attention is drawn to the feathers or wings of the 'Anqā, in 1.281 and the following,

1.1628, p.66:

جای هو بحر زرف کز و گندرد ہی      عنقا بزخم شہر و زوق ببادبان

"A goblet deep like the sea, which the 'Angā with a beat of its wing does not cross nor a ship with its sails."

In neither of these two last examples is there any suggestion that there is any magical power in the par of the 'Angā. The suggestion is one of power and strength. These are the most salient characteristics of this creature. Mustawfī tells us that the 'Angā is 'a bird of powerful build, such that it can easily carry off an elephant'. (4).

Azraqī also indicates a number of other features embodied in the 'Angā. The size of the beast is stressed in 1.1790, where the 'Angā descending upon its nest is compared to the mist enveloping the mountain-top. Azraqī also regards it as being highly coloured, for in 1.8, the earth at springtime becomes like the breast of the 'Angā, and in 1.265, it has a melodious voice like the dove. In spite of the fact that Azraqī is able to give us some indication of the appearance and character of this mighty bird, he has no qualms about contradicting himself in 1.49, which implies by hyperbole, that the form of this beast is unknown:

الاسماورگیتی درستی رای بجز را      نشان از چشم هیوان و شکل از پیکر عنقا

"Until the world rightly brings to your mind by wisdom, an indication of the well of life and the shape of the form of the 'Angā.....".

In brief the Sīmurgh appears as that fabulous bird which is found in the epic of Firdawsī, whose feather has magical properties. The 'Anqā is likewise a fabulous bird, powerful, colourful and even inscrutable. It is difficult to identify any overlapping in the characteristics that would permit us to equate these two creatures. There are obviously a number of 'Anqās and even a number of Sīmurghs - Isfandiyār killed one (5) - it is even possible that Azraqī regarded the Sīmurgh as an 'Anqā, i.e. one in particular. Yet such speculation has no basis in the evidence found in the Dīvān, where they remain individual creatures of legend. Only with regard to the nest of the 'Anqā on the mountain-top and that of the young Sīmurghs upon the lofty battlements, and thus the emphasis on the heights of their nests, is there any common ground.

The other fabled creature which is found in the Dīvān is the dragon. It is called thu'ban - an Arabic word - (6), azhdarhā or azhdahā. From lls.43 and 1711 we learn that it is fearsome and a mighty opponent; in l.1233 there is a little more information:

گر از راه بر طریق رفته تو  
نهان کن ز نهیب تو سر در دهن

"If the dragon should come upon the path of your army, the stone through dread of you would hide in its tail."

In this line there is an allusion to the belief that the dragon possessed in its head, like the snake, a stone of special properties (7).

Unfortunately we learn no more about the dragon. For our poet and his contemporaries, Mustawfī's description of the dragon may help to give us an idea of its awful aspect: 'It is a huge-bodied animal,



terrible in aspect, with wide mouth and many teeth, with flaming eyes and of great length. At first it was a snake, and in process of time became a dragon and changed its shape; and on this subject they have said: "When the snake finds its opportunity it becomes a dragon." The author of the 'Ajā'ib al Makhlūqāt' says that when the snake's length reaches thirty yards, and its age a hundred years, they call it a dragon; and it grows gradually bigger until it becomes such that the animals on dry land are terror-stricken at it; God most high then casts it into the sea; and in the ocean also its size increases, to that its length exceeds ten thousand yards....." (8).

#### Iskandar

We shall now give our attention to the human - or perhaps super-human - figures found in the various myths and legends of the Persian epos to which Azraqī alludes. We shall begin with Iskandar, for he is the most popular of such figures in the Dīvān. As such we may assume that he had the greatest hold on Azraqī's imagination, if not on his audience. Let us first look at the attributes and character of Alexander that Azraqī portrays.

Iskandar, occasionally Sikandar, is a great monarch. His generosity and regal virtues are clear from 1.585, where he is compared to the poet's mamdūh, and in 1.1374 he is mentioned in the same context as the mighty Jamshīd. However, Azraqī shows a particular interest in two aspects of the Alexander Romance: His building of a wall (sadd) and his journey into the realm of darkness in pursuit of the fountain of life. Both legends are recounted in the Shāhnāma.

The wall of Alexander is mentioned in 1.2302, 1.426 and typically

in this line, 1.800:

اگر بسد سکندر درون بود زرتو بطمع سایل شکافد آهنین دیوار

"If your (mamdūh's) gold were within the wall of Sikandar, through the desire of a petitioner it would burst its iron walls."

In Firdawsī's great epic, the episode when Alexander builds a wall to keep out the privations of Gog and Magog, is amply treated. The wall was of great length and naturally of epic proportions, being five hundred yards wide and three hundred <sup>high</sup> ~~wide~~. Azraqī's suggestion that it is made of iron is a simplification of Firdawsī, who tells us that it was made of a number of metals that were fused together by fire (9).

References to Alexander's journey to the realm of darkness are more frequent. He sought the spring of life (chasma-yi hayvān), 1.619, or the water of life (āb-i hayāt) in the west, 1.2265, and in 1.2266 a voice from heaven (hātif) reproaches him for his vanity. We learn that in this darkness Alexander was riding not upon earth and stones but upon jewels, as in 1.242:

نبود آگاه اسکندر چو شد از حد تاریکی که بر گوهر پی راند ز بر خاک درهم و اشقر

"Iskandar was unaware when he went from the frontier of darkness that he was riding his dark, chestnut horse not upon the earth but on jewels."

All these features are to be found in the Shāhnāma. Iskandar's search for the fountain of life was in the west, in fact initially

in the company of Khiḍr, whom he lost after two days in the dark. The voice from heaven was that of the angel Isrāfīl. The select band of soldiers accompanying the hero were told to collect the stones of the road; when they emerged into the light again they found they had collected precious gems (10).

Another allusion by Azraqī, found also in the Shāhnāma is that Iskandar by a talisman secured the wealth of the world and hid it in the earth, 1.799. This is a slight elaboration for Firdawsī does not appear to mention any talism and states that Iskandar hid his treasure only he knew where (11).

One fact that occurs in the Dīvān which apparently is not found in Firdawsī is that Alexander was connected in some way with the city of Herat; 1.2138: (12)

سکندری تو از یی کارزوی حضرت است      یری بهشت که کرد سکندر است به راه

"You are an Alexander in as much as the desire of your majesty is Hari, a paradise which Alexander made Hira(t)."

Firdawsī states that Alexander founded ten cities, but he does not name them (13). This line may suggest a tradition to explain the two main names by which Azraqī's home town is known. Mustawfī, however, says that Alexander rebuilt the city (14) and this belief may be implied in the line we have just quoted. There is an historical basis for this assumption, for Alexander during his immense eastern campaign founded a city at the site of Herat, which was known as Alexandria-in-Areia (15). Possibly the memory of this event lingered on in local and other traditions.

Although most of Azraqī's knowledge of the Romance of Alexander has a marked similarity to that of the Shāhnāma, the point of the last paragraph suggests that this was not his only source for such information. Although the epic of Firdawsī is clearly very important for him, it should not preclude the possibility that the poet was acquainted with other sources that are non-extant (16). The assessment of the importance of the Shāhnāma as a source for Azraqī, who was born no doubt very shortly after Firdawsī's completion of it, is a problem throughout most of this chapter.

#### Persian Kings and Heroes

A large number of famous heroes of ancient Iran are mentioned by Azraqī. Often we have only their names; the knowledge of the audience is to supply the rest. At times reference is made to certain famous episodes or attributes of these figures. Although both Amīrānshāh and Tughānshāh were Saljūqs and thus Turks, Afrāsiyāb, the greatest of the warriors of Tūrān with whom the Saljūqs were associated (17) is conspicuous by his absence.

As may be expected Rustam is one of the most frequently mentioned heroes. He is called Rustam-i Zāl, after his father, as in 1.1342, and also Rustam-i Dastān as in 1.1931. Mention of his father is always found in the context of the son's exploits, as in the following, 1.498:

بعون زال و رفش و در سیمرغ      ز یک تن کرد رسم پاک کشور

"Rustam alone cleansed the country with the aid of Zāl, Rakhsh and the feather of the Sīmurgh."

The same combination of characters is found in 1.501. Apart from the Simurgh, which we have already discussed, Rustam is also accompanied by his trusty steed Rakhsh (see also 1.1389).

The power of the mamduh and his army is compared to one of the famous episodes of Rustam's lengthy career in 1.1185, which cites Āzhang and the Dīv-i Sapīd (also 1.1183 where they are called Arzhang and Dīv-i Palīd). In his series of Herculean labours known as the Haft Khwān, the sixth was to defeat the demon chief Arzhang and the seventh to vanquish the White Demon (18). The White Demon is also mentioned in 1.1862 with qāssa-yi Māzandarān, indicating the Shāhnāma. Both the Shāhnāma and the Haft Khwān, as well as the name of Firdawsī, are found in 1.1878:

از قصصی بای که در سینه پدید آمده نظم فردوسی بکار آید نه رزم بهت خوان

"The tales which are found in the Shāhnāma were brought about by the verse of Firdawsī not the battles of the Haft Khwān."

It is clear that Azraqī owes much to the Shāhnāma of Firdawsī for these images; what is important is Firdawsī's versification, not the battles themselves. The line immediately preceding the last-mentioned says:

قصه مشهور عاشقی بود باریک دست گوهری گردد هو منظوم اندر آری بر زبان

"Heaven forbid that tales in prose should be humble and without substance; they become a jewel, when versified embellishing the tongue."

Here Azraqī is pointing out that it is the poetry that is of

value, not the events that they describe. As further examples will show, Azraqī is voicing the ennui many of his contemporaries found in the events of the Shāhnāma, an ennui based not so much on aesthetic considerations but rather on the political situation where the Turkish rulers were hostile to the glorification of Iranian heroes (19) The clearest example of this is Maḥmūd's famous rejection of Firdawsī's Shāhnāma.

Rustam is also mentioned in l.238; he is found in the company of Nawdar whom we therefore assume is considered by Azraqī to be a hero or warrior. This is slightly incongruous for in the Shāhnāma Nawdar is a tyrannical king who is killed by Afrāsiyāb (20). However, not too much attention should be paid to this, for Nawdar is the rhyming word and may have been selected from expediency.

Among the famous kings that are merely mentioned and whose greatness is implied is Jamshīd. In lls.1374 and 1483 the mamduḥ is called the 'Jamshīd of the age' and 'Jamshīd in wisdom'; in l.229 Jamshīd commands dīv and parī as in the Shāhnāma. Likewise mention is made in the same context as Rustam of pūr-i Siyāvush; presumably this is Kaykhusraw the child of Siyāvush and Firangīs, the daughter of Afrāsiyāb (21). Siyāvush himself is found in l.1944; it suggests that he took some sort of oath as a test (22).

Kaykhusraw, whom we have suggested is the pūr-i Siyāvush, possesses in the following line, l.278, a rather exceptional cup or goblet:

نوگوی مگر جام کیخسروست      منقش درو پیکر بنت کسور

"Would you not say it is the cup of Kaykhusraw, wherein are inscribed the form of the seven climes?"

The ownership of such a cup by this king does not appear to be a tradition found in the Shāhnāma. However, the poets often credited Jamshīd with such a cup, a famous example being found in Fitzgerald-Khayyam: "Iram indeed is gone with all its rose, and Jamshyd's sev'n-ring'd cup where no one knows....." (23).

We cannot say why Azraqī ascribes such a cup to Kaykhusraw.

The poet also refers to Kaykāvus and his feast, which may refer to a number of occasions in the Shāhnāma, l.1944, and to Kayqubād in l.1988.

At times Azraqī draws our attention to some notable events in the great epic of Firdawsī. In this example the mamdūh deals with his enemy as Farīdūn did with Zuhhāk, l.2230:

نور مثال فریدون نشسته از بر تخت      عدو بگونه ضحاک در فگنده بپا

"Seated upon the throne like Farīdūn you cast your enemy into the pit like Zuhhāk."

The episode to which Azraqī is alluding is that in which Farīdūn, the son of Abtīn and Farūnak, with the assistance of the blacksmith Kāva, defeated the monstrous tyrant Zuhhāk and buried him in a pit (24).

Another episode involves the hero Bīzhan. From lls.1692-3, we are informed that Bīzhan in the company of other Iranian ('Ajam) forces killed terrifying boars. Firdawsī relates that with Gīrgīn, Bīzhan, the lover of Manīja, slew a number of predatory wild boars in the country of Arman. Azraqī adds that he heard this from

khavar, whereas he had seen his king kill a lion with his own eyes. What does he mean by khavar? Does he mean the tales of Māzandarān, or popular oral tradition, or is he using this word simply as a pseudonym for the Shāhnāma which had recently been committed to verse by Firdawsī?

The tales (qāssa) of Māzandarān (25) are mentioned yet again in 1.1970, followed by references to a number of epic heroes; 11s.1970-1:

قصہ مازندران گر شنوی از من شنو      تا بگویم عین حال قصہ مازندران  
گر بدیدی زنده اورا بدی او بستی مگر      بهمن و اسفندیار و اردشیر باکان

"If you would listen to the tales of Māzandarān listen to me as I tell you the essence of the tales of Māzandarān. If you saw him (mamdūh) living, before him girded stand Bahman, Isfandiyār and Ardashīr Bābakān."

The heroes listed are found in the Shāhnāma and are respectively the son of Isfandiyār, the son of Lohurāsp, whilst Ardashīr Bābakān was the first king of the Sasanian dynasty. Again we find that Azraqī is decrying the heroes of the epic, which would please his Turkish mamdūhān. In this example, a number of famous heroes are made to serve his patron. The 'essence' of the traditional tales and to some extent their value, is that the poet can show the superiority of his mamdūh over the heroes that are portrayed in the epic.

With Ardashīr, Azraqī is in what we should regard as history



rather than legend or myth. The first Sasanian monarch is also mentioned in lls.2025 and 2293; on both occasions he is in the company of Ardavān. Ardavān is regarded as the last king of the Parthian dynasty, whom western sources call Artabanus III or IV (26). He was also the father-in-law of Ardashīr who later defeated him; no doubt the genealogy was designed to reinforce the legitimacy of the Sasanians (27). By comparing both of these kings with the prowess of the mamdūh, Azraqī shows a regard for them but as in l.2293 they are merely nādirān-in mulk.

Elsewhere in the Dīvān we find the name of Dārā, in l.380 where he is called Khusraw and in l.26 in the same context as Kisrā. Dārā, according to the Shāhnāma's tradition, was the son of Dārāb and defeated by Alexander. Kisrā is a rather vague term which indicates any king of Persia. It is probably in this sense that we find the term used in l.315, where the poet refers to the qasr of Kisrā; the vagueness of the term is further strengthened for it stands in apposition to the īvān-i qaysar.

Nūshīrvān, the great Sasanian king is found in l.1613, where the author alludes to his many servants - in which respect the mamdūh exceeds him- and in l.1942. In this line Nūshīrvān is associated with the feast of Mihrgān. Unfortunately it is not clear on what basis Azraqī makes this allusion; it does not seem to come from the epic of Firdawsī. Moreover al Bīrūnī records that the festival celebrated the day when Afrīdūn defeated Bivarasp (Žuhhāk) and imprisoned him in Demāvand (28).

This anomaly is further confused for us by Azraqī, for in

1.761 we are told that the feast of Nawrūz is the feast of Khusraw Afrīdūn. In this respect the poet is contradicted not only by al Bīrūnī (29), but also the tradition of the Shāhnāma. The prevalent tradition in Iran has always ascribed this feast and its instigation to Jamshīd. The discrepancies involved with these festivals are perplexing for Azraqī has usually shown himself quite familiar with the prevailing epic tradition.

Although Khusraw Parvīz is not mentioned by name in the Dīvān, his fame is indirectly involved and the poet may have been aware of this. Thus in 1.1165, Azraqī mentions Bārbudī melodies. The name of Bārbud is known from the Shāhnāma, where he is called one of the minstrels of Parvīz (30). Also in, for example 11s.1868 and 1822, Azraqī speaks of various royal treasures; sometimes he qualifies them as shayigān - probably indicating merely regal - and he also calls them bād-āvard. This last treasure is a proper name given to one of the treasures of Parvīz, which total eight in the Shāhnāma and which he collected from Chīn, Bulghār, Rūm and Rūs (31).

### Miscellany

In this section we have chosen to consider the prophet Mānī and others. Although Mānī's religious reforms were of importance, for the Roman Empire no less than for Iran, Azraqī from the evidence of the Dīvān views him only as an iconographer and hence an idolater. In 11s. 197, 276 and 548 he appears with another idolater, Āzar, the alleged father of Abraham (32), and in 1.1842 mention is made of him alone. In the imagination of our poet the name of Mānī

represents colourful pictures. Therefore the poet in l.548 speaks of the khāma-yi Mānī, and likewise in l.1842; in l.197 the world of spring-time has a thousand colourful pictures drawn by Mānī. Effectively the name of Mānī is synonymous with painted idols. Rather than seek the fame of such idols in the history of Iran during the contemporary period, we should look not only to Inner Asia (33), but also the contemporary genre.

Finally we must record that Azraqī mentions in l.12, the names of Vāmiq and 'Azrā. The source and hence the poet's knowledge of the names of these two lovers must rest upon a mathnavī written during the age of Maḥmūd of Ghaznī by 'Unṣurī, which has come down to us in an incomplete form (34). It is clear from the work of H. Ritter (35) that this story owes little to the national epos of Iran; rather it is drawn from Hellenistic sources. As Azraqī mentions it only once, and then referring only to the names, we may assume that it plays little part in his consciousness of the epos in general.

Throughout most of this section we have been concerned with personages drawn from the Iranian and adjacent epos, whether legendary or historical. Most of the figures that occur are to be found in the pages of Firdawsī's Shāhnāma; Azraqī is clearly acquainted with this work and has constantly drawn upon it. Indeed it is a tribute to Firdawsī's craft that his work should gain so soon after its composition renown to be of use in the imagery and poetry of his compatriots.

However, Azraqī has occasionally given us reason to believe that

his sources for Iranian tradition do not rely wholly upon the man from Tūs. His digressions and inconsistencies with certain features in the epic of Firdawsī may suggest that Azraqī was acquainted with other sources, or possibly with those that Firdawsī employed and which he, Firdawsī, altered. The lack of such sources today emphasise the stature achieved by the Shāhnāma. An alternative explanation for Azraqī's inconsistency with the more general tradition may lie less in his acquaintance with Firdawsī and more in the vagueness and inaccuracy of his own memory. Yet we should not forget that Azraqī has shown that he can cast his net farther afield and draw on a source such as Vāmiq u 'Azrā.

Azraqī's main use of characters and creatures from the epic tradition is to praise his king or whoever the mamdūh happens to be often by making them greater than epic heroes. Often it is sufficient to refer to certain characters only by name; he may compare the mamdūh to Alexander or Jamshīd and only the mention of their names is necessary to convey his implication to the audience, for they are already familiar with these great heroes, their virtues and their exploits. His verse in this respect thus demands an informed public, who need little explanation or commentary to aid their understanding and appreciation.

By the same measure the popularity of, for example, Iskandar, may well point to his popularity not only in the imagination of the poet, but bearing in mind the nature of the genre, also to his popularity in the minds of his listeners. The very name Iskandar is sufficient to conjure up a host of emotions and associations in

the breasts of the audience.

The points raised in the last two paragraphs are features of the importance of the epos in the work of the poet we are considering, and the same may be said for those with whom he is contemporary and who write in the same genre. What other conclusions may we draw from the position which myth and legend holds in the *Dīvān*?

We have pointed out how Azraqī uses figures from the epos to praise and flatter his patron. He is using figures who represent for his age the most desirable qualities for kingship and suzerainty over men which his patron supercedes. These super-human characters might be regarded by us as being legendary or even mythical. However there is no reason to suggest that Azraqī viewed them in this manner. Doubtless for him, Jamshīd is just as concrete an historical figure as Anūshīrvān.

It will be acknowledged that the great kings of the past strike our poet as the most suitable figures for comparison with his present patron. It may not only be political expediency which rules out using any contemporary sultān or ruler as a fitting comparison for the mamdūh; rather Azraqī chooses to look back to a vaguely defined past where he can find the paragons of regal virtues that he seeks for his purpose of elevating his mamdūh above them. This vagueness may indicate a lack of any sense of progressive historical development. It is as if he were looking back upon a golden age, which the present times compare with favourably and supercede.

As shall be seen below the Muslim tradition is very important for Azraqī. However, on the whole the epic models he selects and

the characteristics with which they are imbued are Iranian - not even Turanian. He never compares his king with a Mahmūd or any other great Muslim king. He always goes back to the distant past, to tales of Rustam and the like with which he may have been familiar from childhood. In an age and a society which was within the dār al Islām, the strong Iranian sentiment of much of his heroic imagery demonstrates a non-Arab cultural awareness which may be a facet of a primitive nationalism, and this in spite of the contemporary political atmosphere, where the Turkish rulers, and the poets in their train, tend to relegate the epos to a lower position.

PERSIAN EPOS - NOTES

- 1) E. Baer, Sphinxes and Harpies in Medieval Islamic Art, Jerusalem 1965, pps.38-42.
- 2) Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī, Nuzhat ul Qulūb, Oriental Translation Fund, New Series XXX, R.A.S. 1928, The Zoological Section Translated by J. Stephenson, pps. 50-1.
- 3) For the Shāhnāma, as well as the text edited by M. Dabīrsiyāqī, six vols, Tehran 1335/1956, we have consulted the translation by A.G. and J. Warner, The Shahnama of Firdawsi, London 1912, and J. Atkinson's translation and abridgement, London 1832 (?). Atkinson p.50-1; Dabīrsiyāqī 1 p.124.
- 4) Stephenson, loc.cit.
- 5) Warner V, p.131; stage 5 or Isfandiyar Haft Khwān. Dabīrsiyāqī 111 p.1403.
- 6) For dragon-headed water-spouts see section on minerals, lapis-lazuli.
- 7) See Ṭūsī, Tansūkhnāma, p.142.
- 8) Stephenson, p.36-7, text 52-3.
- 9) Atkinson, p.337. Dabīrsiyāqī, IV p.1660.
- 10) Warner, VI, p.160-63. Dabīrsiyāqī IV p.1656-1659.
- 11) ibid, p.110.
- 12) 'Abd al Rasūlī reads the second miṣra: بر آنکه هست جوید گذر است پناه

- 13) Warner, p.189.
- 14) Mustawfī, op.cit, the Geographical Section, trans. by G. Le Strange, E. J. W. Gibb Mem. New Series XXIII, ii, London, p.150.
- 15) A. R. Burn, Pelican History of Greece, London 1966, p.345, map.
- 16) See notes, Warner VI, p.84 for an indication of the complexity of sources that feed the Shāhnāma; obviously for such an important historical figure mention of him is found in many <sup>works</sup> ~~words~~.
- 17) See Nizām al Mulk, Siyāsatnāma, ed. Qazvīnī, Tehran 1344, p.8-9.
- 18) Warner II, p.57; the sixth stage against Arzhang and the seventh stage against Dīv-i Sapīd. Dabīrsiyāqī I pps. 311-313.
- 19) See Shafī'ī yi Kadkanī pp.183-191.
- 20) Atkinson p.79. Dabīrsiyāqī I, p.241,
- 21) ibid, p.154ff. " II, p.541 and p.557.
- 22) It may refer to his protested innocence before the accusation of Sūdaba, see S. Miskūb, Sug-i Siyāvush Tehran 1350, p.11.
- 23) E. Fitzgerald, Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, London, 1944, p.39 and note p.120.
- 24) Atkinson p.34. Dabīrsiyāqī I 53-57.
- 25) Azraqī always speaks of Māzandarān, never of Ṭabaristān; Le Strange in Lands of the Eastern Caliphate, London 1966, p.369, says that it was in the thirteenth century that the name Māzandarān displaced Ṭabaristān, Yāqūt being one of the first to use Māzandarān. Azraqī's usage predates this by at least a hundred and fifty years.
- 26) Warner VI, p.201, n.4.



- 27) *ibid.* p.213.
- 28) Al Bīrūnī, Kitāb al Tafhīm, p.180.
- 29) *ibid.*
- 30) Warner VIII, p.406; Dabīrsīyāqī V, p.2489.
- 31) *ibid.* " V, p.2497.
- 32) For Āzar see section on Muslim tradition.
- 33) For Mānī in Central Asia see section on geography.
- 34) See lines assembled from Vāmiq ū 'Adhrā in Y. Qarib's edition of the Dīvān-i 'Unsurī, Tehran, 1323, introduction pps. yah to ku, and the edition of Vāmiq ū 'Adhrā by M. Shafī'ī, Lahore 1967.
- 35) H. Ritter, Dīvān-i 'Unsurī, ed. by Y. Qarib, in Oriens 1, 1948, pps. 134-8.

- 11 -

THE ISLAMIC TRADITION

For Azraqī's age, from the humblest to the highest, the religion of Islam was of paramount importance in their lives and outlook. Such was its strength that it was unquestioned, such was its assimilation into the general consciousness of the people that it was taken for granted and became completely identified with them and their way of life.

Because in his Dīvān, Azraqī is not concerned with religious themes - he is in no way a sūfī - it is unnecessary for him to reiterate any dogma of his religion; it is a part of his world, so integral that his objectivity of the matter is obscured; it is so much part and parcel of his experience that he has little cause to consider it. Nevertheless, although any formal consciousness of it is not apparent in his verse, it is never very far away. By mentioning the name of God and other prophets, as well as various allusions to the Qur'ān, in his work, the Muslim tradition surreptitiously pervades his poetry. In his attempts to praise to the highest his patrons he may also overstep the bounds of strict orthodoxy and utter profanities. These are the aspects of his work which concern us here.

The presence of God is, as we have already seen, implicit in His command over the universe and the motions of the stars and through

their influence into the very lives of mortal men. However God's omnipotence is not always indirect. Azraqī sees it during the spring, when God, supremely just - Dādgar - clothes the trees, who resemble pilgrims in Haram, in the apparel of the denizens of Paradise (1.324). Not only is the power of God demonstrated in His regeneration of the dead world of winter, but our attention is also drawn to the promise and the delights of Paradise in the world to come.

In his references to God, Azraqī never loses sight of his main objective which is to lavish praise upon his patron. Although God controls the world, He endows the select band who rule it in His name with a special right. In this way kings and princes who act rightly in the sight of God- and of course our poet's patrons are among these - are pleasing to Him. On a number of occasions Azraqī links the pleasure of God with the noble acts of his prince, as in the following, where the battles of Amīrānshāh receive divine approval; lls.482-3:

ملائک بر پہا آواز دادند      ز شادی و ز شگفتی اللہ اکبر  
ز فرایزد و آثار دولت      بجائی باشد این واضح و مضمر

"The angels in heaven called out in happiness and wonder: God is most great; a clear sign not concealed of the charisma of God and the <sup>monuments</sup> ~~vestiges~~ of state."

If dawlat does here mean state rather than fortune it is particularly appropriate for the prince is linked with the majesty of God. The words of the angels are also particularly apt in this context, for apart from being pious, they were often used as a war-cry by Muslim warriors.

The relationship between the majesty of God and that of temporal rulers is not limited to the behaviour and deeds of the latter in battle. God's favour is also endowed in those rulers who show other regal virtues; indeed, in the following, the implication is that God is the source of such virtues in the being of the mamdūh;  
1.73:

بدست و طبع تو عین سخا و بہت را سبب نہاد تو گوئی سبب الاسباب

"You would say, the Causer of Causes caused there to be in your hand and nature the essence of liberality and ambition."

And again in lls.1457-8, we find that the mamdūh and his attendant virtues are a gift from God; lls.1457-8;

در آفرینش شئی جز بر کمال از خلق کام پدید جز اورا نداده رب رحیم  
زبان جاری و وجہ ملیح و قدر بلند کف کردہ و رای متین و طبع سیم

"At creation the Merciful Lord presented to him alone of mankind six things of perfection: a flowing tongue, a beautiful face, a lofty power, a sound wisdom and a healthy nature."

There is a clear affinity in the poet's mind between the mamdūh and religion (see below, 'Kingship and the Virtues of Kings').

Although the mamdūh's character and virtues flow from the grace of God, there are occasions when the poet in his extravagant zeal to praise, sings so outlandishly that he might be regarded as uttering profanities. Azraqī is far from averse to writing such in his verse. It is an aspect of mubālagha. Ahrīman, is more often the term used for the devil than shayṭān; although his soul is dark in l.1606, the patron's arrow is capable of burning it (l.43); so powerful is the mamdūh that he can even convert the devil as in l.1561:

اگر مایه اهریمنست کفر و ضلالت      بنور رای تو دین دار گردد اهریمن

"Although unbelief and error are the capital of Ahrīman, through the light of your wisdom Ahrīman would become pious."

We cannot say what the reaction of the poet's audience was to such ideas expressed in verse. Yet having some notion of the behaviour of, for example, Ṭughānshāh, it is unlikely that Azraqī was reproached. As we shall show there are further examples where the poet for the purpose of praising his patron oversteps the bounds of orthodoxy.

As a Muslim, the repertoire of images Azraqī employs is heavily influenced by episodes from the Qur'ān and the traditions of Islam. Along with the tradition of the Persian epic, the Muslim tradition forms an important source for the poet; these two themes thus show their prominence in the poet's imagination as well as his society.

Amongst the doctrines of Islam to which Azraqī alludes, the

Last Judgement is a prominent one. In particular there are two occasions on which the poet in striving to praise his patron transcends orthodoxy. In l.293, the foe, slain by the spear (sinān) of the mamdūh, <sup>is filled with</sup> ~~inspires~~ such dread that the slain person does not come to the Last Judgement (maḥshar). By such exorbitant praise (mubālagha) the poet has endowed his patron with a power greater than that of God, for it is stated in the Qur'an that on the Last Day, God ordains: 'We shall gather them all together, nor shall we leave out any of them' (1).

Likewise, there is a similar example of poetic license caused by the expediency of the madh in l.232:

بر آن سر کان بقیع تو زین کلاه جدا گردد      نعلن بپیر بر انگیزند روز حشر در محشر

"That very head which was separated from its body by your sword, (then) its body shall on the day of the Last Gathering come to the Place of Gathering without its head."

Again contrary to this, we may draw attention to the Qur'ānic text which states that on the Last Day man shall be called before God as he was first created (2).

In such instances it is always the aim of the poet to praise his patron. In a similar vein the fountain of Kawthar, the source of every God-given grace (3), may be matched by the mamdūh. Such is the power of the mamdūh that from the water in which his hands are washed (which is part of the formal Muslim ablutions) arises the spring (chashma) of Kawthar (l.555); from lls.440-1, we learn that as the stream of Zamzam was opened by God at the feet of Isma'īl, then

the power of the foot of the shahanshāh can rub the heavens and open by his charisma (farr) Kawthar at the door of heaven; and again in 1.222 the foot of the patron's ambition (himmat) can open up Kawthar upon the globe of heaven.

Amongst other doctrines from the Qur'ān, Azraqī mentions the Bridge of the Last Judgement (4), Dajjāl - the Antichrist - (1.1268), Riḍwān - the gardener of Paradise - who envies the mamdūh's gardener (1.2002), and the people of 'Ād (1.499).

Azraqī stresses his knowledge of the Qur'ān by frequently employing in his imagery references to the various prophets that are to be found in its pages; at times his knowledge of them reveals the elaboration of later tradition.

Of the prophets with which Azraqī concerns himself one of the most popular is the prophet Khidr. There are certain attributes found in the qasā'id pertaining to this rather complex and shadowy figure. We find that his apparel is green as in lls.763 and 2087, a fact which the poet utilises in his imagery of spring; this prophet is also immortal in 1.1812 and 1.1855 where his immortality extends to both worlds; and in 1.236 he crosses the waters of the sea dryshod.

All of these elements are found in the traditions associated with Khidr. However, they are not drawn solely from the Qur'ān. In the Qur'ān (5), Moses accompanied by his servant journeys to Majma' al Baḥrayn, where through the influence of Satan the fish they have with them escaped into the water and swam away. They seek the fish but meet a servant of God; Moses offers to follow

him if taught the right way. The servant of God tells him he will not understand what he asks, must not ask him for explanations and thus will not be able to bear with him. This comes to pass and Moses losing patience, seeks an explanation. He finally leaves Moses explaining his actions.

Most commentators identify the servant of God with Khidr. Khidr, originally al Khadir - the Green Man -, in the course of time became the centre of numerous stories. The fish in the story is lost or revived in the water of the Spring of Life where Khidr lives; Khidr is wrapped in a cloak, or lives on an island or a green carpet upon the sea. He is also very involved in the search by Alexander for the Spring of Life; amongst various popular traditions Khidr possesses on the journey a fish, whose revival in the water shows him the Well of Life - or there is no fish and he recognizes it by other means - and Khidr dives into it. In Nizami, Khidr travels not with Alexander but Elijah (Ilyas) and they drink from the Spring, thus both becoming immortal. He is said by some to get the name Khidr - green - by having dived into the Spring of Life; where he prays or walks causes greenness and thus he is connected with the vegetable kingdom. Many other characteristics are associated with him. However, it is clear that Azraqi in his imagery has drawn on various traditional sources.

Abraham is another popular prophet, who is either called Ibrahim or Khalil - i.e. the Friend (of God). Azraqi is concerned essentially with only one aspect of the stories connected with this prophet. In lls.1461, 546-7 and 597, mention is made of the miracle



experienced by Iṣḥāq when he passed unharmed through a fire. This tradition derives from the Quran (6). In the last two lines we have referred to - both of which form parts of tashbīḥs - the poet records a slight embellishment of the story, doubtless derived from later tradition, that the fire turned to greenery, rayḥān; of this idea the poet makes ample use in his description of the spring (see chapter on Flora); Rayḥān becomes the garden and the fire the rose or other flowers. The other line seems to suggest that like Abraham his followers would be safe in a fire.

Of other prophets found in the Qur'ān, Azraqī alludes to Joseph (and of course Zulaykā) (1.763),

, the breath of Masīḥ-i Maryam (1.1379), the  
palace and throne of Sulaymān (lls. 275 and 244), Nūḥ (1.1667 mention-  
ing his safety from the storm) (7), and David kneading steel (8).  
The miracle when Moses caused a stream to flow from the rock which  
he had struck with his staff is mentioned in 1.2091. One character  
who is not a prophet is Āzar, the supposed father of Abraham, with  
whom the son remonstrated over the worship of idols. In the Dīvān,  
Āzra is always associated with idolatry (e.g. 1.276) (9).

Finally with regard to the prophets it is necessary to point out that Azraqī was aware, being an orthodox Muslim, that prophethood had ended with Muḥammad; 1.2301:

د جهان گر وحی جایز بودی اندر وقت ما بر حقیقت مرزا جایز بدی پیغمبری

"If in the world of our time Revelation were permissible, in truth to you would be permissible prophethood."

This is a reference to the Qur'an which states that Muḥammad is the seal of the prophets (10).

Of the many institutions of Islam, Azraqī makes little use in his imagery. However, there is one theme which is utilised in many of his tashbīḥs. This is 'Īd. When he speaks of the Festival usually he is referring to the 'Īd al Fitr, although the 'Īd-i Qurbān cannot be excluded. The poet's use of the Festival is not particularly motivated by pious belief; rather it is an opportunity to praise the king and his liberality. The fast of Ramaḍān is in his mind of less a devotional exercise, and more the prelude to the festivities at the end of the month. Azraqī points out the hardship of the fast in l.650; but the hardship is not that the faster is hungry but rather that 'his nature inclines towards wine'. The Festival of Islam offers its best opportunity to the aims of the poet when it is synchronised with a traditional Persian festival such as Spring, as e.g. l.761.

Azraqī is not a ṣūfī. However he does refer to ṣūfism on one occasion, and it is an interesting line for it reveals to us the way in which the poet thought of ṣūfism; thus l.777:

کشف و نیست بهمانا طریقت گل سرخ / که بر سماع بدرید جامه صوفی و در

"Indeed the way of the red rose is sufism for at the samā' it tears its clothes like a ṣūfī."

Azraqī's picture of the ṣūfī is of a person crazed by the music and dance of the ceremony (samā').

Of the important personages of Islam who came after Muḥammad, Azraqī refers in one line (l.354) to the four Rāshidūn, 'Umar, Abū Bakr, 'Uthmān and 'Alī. The last mentioned is also found in l.466;

in praise of Amīrānshāh and his exploits in Sīstān; the poet says:

بدر بند سجستان آنچه او کرد      مای کرده بد حیدر خیر

"Haydar at Khaybar set an example for what he did at the darband of Sajistān."

Haydar which primarily means a lion was also a nickname given to 'Alī and Khaybar was a strong fortress which was captured by him during the campaigns of Muḥammad (11). Although 'Alī is not mentioned by name, 1.638 does make a reference to the sword which was one of his famous possessions, Dhū'l Figār. This sword which was double-bladed was part of the booty of the Prophet from the battle of Badr; it passed to 'Alī and the 'Abbasids. According to one tradition it bore the words lā yuqṭalu muslimun bi-kāfirin (12).

As we have seen Azraqī is naturally very familiar with the traditions of his religion. However, this does not prevent him from erring at times into what some might consider profanity. Always he is striving to praise his mamdūh; if at times he is somewhat indiscreet then this is poetic license; it is because of the exigencies of the genre and an indication of the atmosphere of the court where he was working. To assess which of these two features is more important is difficult. The problem is clearer when we consider how often the poet uses idolatry in his imagery. We find mention of Lāt and Hubal (1.1200), but-i khazarī, fitna-yi kashmīr u qibla-yi khazarī, (2328), nigār-i chīn, bahār-i gangī (1.2329) and bahārkhāna-yi gang (1.1169). Islam is popularly supposed to be iconoclastic; in many aspects of its art this is clearly a simplification. In the poetry we are considering, the frequent allusions to

idols are a solid part of the repertoire of the genre within which the poet confines himself. They are all part of the convention. He becomes in no way an idolater because he includes famous idols in his imagery. His imagery has to serve the purpose of arousing his audience. In, for example, the tashbīb where the main themes are usually the beloved and the spring-time, he can awaken those who listen by bringing exotic ideas of beauty to their minds; for his audience idols mean the exotic, voluptuousness and riches. This is his purpose and it goes no further.

As we have seen the poet when dealing with the Persian epos in no way held it in awe or as sacrosanct. His motives for doing so may have been influenced by political considerations. However, when referring to the Muslim tradition, his exaggeration and bending of doctrine must be seen as mubālagha and ighrāq.

THE ISLAMIC TRADITION - NOTES

- 1) Qur'ān XV111 47; translation and commentary by A. Yusuf Ali.
- 2) Qur'ān XV111 48 (Lahore )
- 3) Qur'ān GV111.
- 4) Pul-i mahshar, see QX1X, 71 and note 2518: 'Some refer this verse to the Bridge over Hell, the Bridge Ṣirāṭ, over which all must pass to their final Destiny. This Bridge is not mentioned in the Qur'ān'.
- 5) See Q XV111, 60-82 and the Shorter E.I (London and Leiden 1961) for what follows.
- 6) Q XX1, 69.
- 7) Q X1, 36-49.
- 8) Q XXX1V, 10.
- 9) Q X1X, 41-50; and V1, 74.
- 10) Q XXX111, 40.
- 11) See E.1. (1)
- 12) *ibid.*

- 12 -

KINGSHIP AND THE QUALITIES OF KINGS

E. G. Browne calls the qaṣīda a 'purpose-poem' (1). The qaṣā'id with which we are concerned have two purposes: as well as providing the poet with an opportunity to earn a living, their purpose is to sing the praises of the king; without the latter the former would not be forthcoming.

As the word suggests, it is in the madīha that Azraqī lavishes praise upon his patron. From this part of the qaṣīda emerges a concept of what kingship should entail. Naturally the poet is prone to exaggeration and indeed lies. Not only does such exaggeration hopefully make the mamdūh more likely to grant favours to the poet, but it also reveals an ideal of the king should be and do. Convention plays its part; the names of different patrons might easily be substituted for each other in a large number of instances. Yet this ideal shows what everyone, both poet and patron, regarded as most praiseworthy and desirable in a ruler or man of considerable power.

This concept is not only to be found in the words of poets; and we are fortunate in having during Azraqī's period other works such as Qābūsnāma, Siyāsatnāma and Nasīhat al Mulūk which each express their views on the matter and which we may take into consideration when considering the ideas of our poet. However, we must not forget that the opinions of Azraqī are our primary concern. The emphasis

of a poet may be different to that of statesmen and rulers.

From the Dīvān of Azraqī there are three main themes, which together form his concept of kingship, that we may analyse for our purpose. Having, for example, some knowledge of the reputation of Ṭughānshāh from Chahār Maqāla, it is no surprise to find that a large part of the king's time is spent in recreational pursuits such as wine, song, feasting with associates, hunting, progresses and the celebration of festivals. In opposition to his recreation stands the king's duty to wage war in defence of his realm, where his victories and bravery carry all before them. Finally we shall consider the intrinsic qualities of kingship.

Often these themes are interwoven and overlap each other, but together they give us a picture of what the poet thinks his king should be.

### Royal Recreation

One pursuit in which two of Azraqī's royal masters, Ṭughānshāh and Amīrānshāh indulged as a form of recreation was the hunt. It is not one of the most prominent themes in the Dīvān, but there is some interesting detail. Although hawking is mentioned, the prey with which the poet's patrons concern themselves are larger and more ferocious than might be caught by the mediation of hawks; thus more personal risk is involved and more glory to be gained. In l.796 we are told that the ghurm is hunted for its skin (charm) and the gavazn for its horn (shākh). In poem 51 addressed to Ṭughānshāh the tashbīb included as well as the theme of spring that of hunting; the king's prey includes lion and deer (āhū), and he hunts in the mountains and the plain. Masses of animals come forth for his delight and add to the idyllic scene. A more satisfying description by the poet is that of Amīrānshāh's encounter with a lion to which he claims to have been an eye-witness; as such it is worthy of being quoted at length, lls: 1693-1710:



"I heard of Bīzhan killing the boar in stories (khābar), I saw with my own eyes the king kill a lion - Early one morning he went forth to hunt in the plain (dasht) with wine, minstrel, music (parda), butt and bow (obviously hunting was not the whole purpose of this excursion) - He was drinking happily when two or three people came pointing out a wood and (therein) a lion - Regal intent, the effects of wine and youth placed no danger in killing the fierce lion - He leapt towards the lion; the lion came out of the wood onto the flat plain (hamūn) roaring angrily - From its height, breadth and robustness (durushtī), you would rightly say it was not a lion but a huge camel (hayūn) - Its claws (were) full of blood like the fists of a butcher with four hooks concealed at the end of each fist - ..... - Rightly you would say that its claws were of iron and its teeth of diamonds - It made the necks of the horses react like wild-rue seeds when he struck at their lower flanks - When the valuable (girānmāya) Arab horses saw it they bolted and would obey no one - Men scattered in all directions and the cries and tumult of the warriors and the roar of the lion rose up to the sky - Our lord looked to right and left and saw the weakness of men and the victory of the fierce lion - He chose an arrow, put it to the bow and drew; like a lion towards the lion he turned his reins - If several lions fight hard in battle being wounded and being weak are the same - He waited a while (bar sar-i dast firaw khuft zamānī) lest it should rest, come forth and spring (at him) - The king drew a spade-headed arrow (bīlak), put it in his bow and shot it beneath its ear and (which) threw it there upon its back - In victory its soul left its brave being (shakhs) when the bolt (paykān) entered its brain through the ear."

Then follows general praise of Amīrānshāh. From this episode we should note that the king goes forth with bow and arrow to kill the lion. As the others about him have fled in fear, it is more to the glory of the king that he should go alone to kill the fierce beast and also expose himself to considerable personal danger. It seems, then, that for Azraqī hunting is a royal pastime where his patron can find an opportunity to increase his prowess. This view is somewhat at odds with the paternal advice offered by Kay Kā'ūs in the Qābūsnāma; he is of the opinion that it is unwise for a king to hunt lions or beasts of prey (sibā'), mentioning how two of his relatives had met their deaths by such rashness. He is in favour of hunting with birds, dogs and cheetahs (yūz). However, such prudence does not suit Azraqī's purpose. Azraqī's references to hunting do agree with the counsels of Kay Kā'ūs in several respects; it is fitting to hunt on horseback and the hunt should not be thought of as a means to obtain food but should be for pleasure (ṭamāshā) (2). Thus Azraqī's patrons do not hunt to eat the flesh of the animals they have slain but for other reasons, and as is clear from the excerpt we quoted above, the hunting expedition formed part of a day's outing during which other pleasures were available such as music and drinking. It is not evident how frequently Azraqī's patrons indulged in the hunt; judging from the advice of the Qābūsnāma which suggests hunting on two days of the week only (3), we may assume it was often enough.

As we have seen from the poet's descriptions of the hunt, they are far more complicated affairs than merely riding off into the

countryside with bow and arrow in hand (4). In the company of the king is a large retinue of servants and other members of the court to provide alternative diversions and amusements. The hunt therefore may form part of a royal progress; there is a good example of this to be found in poem 30, which is comprised of eleven lines describing the progress of the king (who remains anonymous) to the town of Pūshang, which is not far from Herat. We are told specifically in 1.1154 that the king has ridden off for amusement - az pay-yi tamāshā and in 1.1155 there is hunting in the plain (sahra); the season of the year - it is presumably spring - makes travelling most fitting (1.1151). It is also clear how the king enjoyed himself; 11s. 1148-50:

شاه کرده است رای زی بپوشند	تاواپش میت و ساز و چنگ
گر شرابی بی خورد بستاند	گرسای بی کند بدرنگ
شادی نو کند بهر منزل	مستی نو کند بهر فرسنگ

"The king has made his way towards Pūshang, accompanying him there is wine, goblet and harp. At times he hastily drinks wine, sometimes he leisurely makes music. Making merry anew at every stage, drinking excessively anew at every farsang."

The elements that we see here forming a part of the court on a

progress are also to be found in another poem, number 63, which is in praise of Amīrānshāh. The tashbīb describes the 'camp' of the king during the evening. At dusk the king is exhorted to go to his tent (khīsh-khāna) and demand the willow branch (as a fan?) and wine, (1.2191). The beauty of the dusk is described and the heat; the poet again turns to the pleasures of wine and moon-like sāqīs (1.2199).

Thus a royal progress contains a number of elements; its purpose is to provide some amusement for the king, often by way of hunting; and other necessities for the 'camp' are wine, song and beautiful attendants.

Whether the patrons of our poet are hunting or progressing leisurely through the open country they are never far away from a goblet of wine. It is, therefore, no surprise to find that at their courts wine is an important theme in their recreation (e.g. 1.1620, 1.2106). Drinking may be considered as almost a royal pastime in the context of the feast, which as this example illustrates, was a time-honoured custom, 1.309:

نورین بزم شاه بر رسم شاهان  
نور می نعل بغروز ساز

"In this royal feast after the manner of kings, illumine the cup with the light of the ruby wine."

However, at court the patron did not limit himself only to eating and drinking. There are other elements in the picture by which he was expected to enjoy himself and provide amusement for those around him; thus 1.836 (from a tashbīb in a poem to 'Alī b. Muḥammad):

وز بنقل و می و بازی دل تو میل کند      می و سُطرنج بدست آید و اسباب قمار

"If you desire story-telling, wine and gaming, there is wine and chess and the means of gambling."

As well as the inevitable wine, there is the game of chess and other games as well as story-telling. Asbāb-i qimār may indicate dice or backgammon; the last-mentioned is already familiar to us, for it was the game that Ṭughānshāh was playing according to the Chahar Maqala and whose lack of fortune caused him to become so angry that only Azraqī's ex-tempore verses could calm him.

However, it is music, song and poetry that are most important at court after the wine with which they are closely associated; this line, from a poem to Ṭughānshāh, is followed by two praising wine, 1.1619, p.66:

از صُورت سُرخوان دل افکاک پر فروس      وز زخمِ روزن سر خورشید پر فغان

"Through the voice of the poetry-reader, the heart of the heavens is full of sighs, through the playing of the harpist the head of the sun is full of lamentation."

The harp (rūd) and wine are also linked together in lines 2106-7, where mention is also made of one of the moods, sarvsitāh. Poem 21 is a description of Khusraw Parvīz's legendary minstrel, Barbud, which points out the joys of music and also refers to a number of moods.

At the court there is also the sāqī (e.g. 1.1625), who as well as serving wine may be the beloved. However, in Azraqī's Dīvān

this figure is not very prominent in this guise.

Line 1795 refers, as well as to the sāqī, to another figure who may be regarded as a court-entertainer, the magician (afsūngar).

In a huṣn-i maqta' at the end of a poem dedicated to Tughānshāh, the principle pleasures available to the monarch are enumerated: the beloved, music and wine; lls.758-9:

گیر و بهوس و شنو و سنان بنه کنون      زلف و لب و سماع و می از سر غم خام  
شو و سماع فود و طرب بوی و بدو شور      دینار و بدره بخشی و جهان گیر و ملک دار

"Take the locks and kiss the lips (of the beloved), listen to the music and take the wine, rid the head of its drowsiness. Demand poetry and music, seek joy and drink wine; grant dīnārs and badra, seize the world and rule the kingdom."

At this court, the patron of our poet has several principal ways of enjoying himself; the impression gained from Azraqī is that the more important are drinking and feasting, music and poetry ( the position of the poet at court is dealt with elsewhere), and to a lesser extent gambling and other games such as chess. The position of these pursuits in the recreation of the mamdūh, whether king or important government dignitary, is consistent with the times, for the Qābūs-nāma offers advice on these topics.

The drinking of wine is a thorny question as it conflicts with strictly orthodox religious dogma. Azraqī in no way censures the

practice. The attitude of Kay Kā'ūs is rather that 'boys will be boys' and that when a prince drinks, his thoughts should never be far away from hopes of repentance and forgiveness (5). Miẓām al Mulk also accepts the drinking of wine by monarchs and asks that decisions and orders given when drunk should be considered again in sobriety, a custom which has a very <sup>long</sup> history in Persian courts (6). Drinking is clearly a strongly entrenched custom, a common aspect of the behaviour of a king. The Siyāsatnāma also encourages a king to choose companions who play chess and backgammon well (7); such games are also accepted by the Qābūs-nāma, although its author is keen that such games should be played for pleasure rather than high stakes (8).

Kay Kā'ūs also regards minstrelsy and poetry as quite fitting for a prince (9). There is nothing novel in the descriptions of the pastimes of the courts mentioned by Azraqī; they conform to the contemporary pattern.

We have seen how the king amused himself in the open country and we have discussed how he might agreeably pass his time at the court. However, we have little idea of his physical surroundings, of the appearance of his palace and its grounds where time was happily passed. There are few non-religious structures from this period remaining to give us an impression of this environment. Some impressions may be gained from poem 9, in which the poet describes the palace of Tughānshāh. Although doubtless it is an idealised picture, it does reveal what poet, and king, would hope to find. What follows is an extract from the relevant part of the poem,

lls.259-82:

"For a new feast in the new palace (sarāy) came the wise lord,  
the victorious king - ..... The king walked graciously in the  
garden, whose client (mawlā) and servant (chākīr) are the spring and  
paradise - (then follow lines describing conventionally the garden,  
its paths (ravish) and the birds with their song) - In the courtyard  
of the garden is a deep pool, like the soul of the wise man and  
with the nature of the eloquent (sukhanvar) - It is not like the sea  
nor Kawthar, but in depth it is like the sea, in purity like Kawthar -  
In purity like the soul, in goodness (khūbī) like knowledge, in purity  
(it is) air and in lightness (lajāfat) like fire - Moving in it a silver-  
faced fish like the new moon in the shining sky - This pleasant  
(khurram) palace garden in one direction is full of suffas,  
pavilions (kākh), īvāns and belvederes (Manzar) - .....  
Above it the orbit of the turning heavens rubs the head of the  
watchman (with its orbit) - Because of so much silver-work (nuqrakārī)  
it is like the palace of Sulaymān, because of such strength it is  
like the Wall of Alexander - Its pictures are the amazement of the  
nature of Mānī, its images (tamāsīl) are the envy of the soul of  
Āzar - Every shadow, picture and shape of the īvāns are portrayed in  
that pool of lapis-lazuli - You would say is that not the cup of Kay  
Khusraw wherein is inscribed a picture of the seven climes - The  
tops of the battlements (kungura) about the walls of the garden rub  
against the form of Gemini (paykar andar dū paykar) - You would say  
they are the long horned gavazn exchanging blows <sup>with</sup> one another -  
Moreover neither the geometer with his thoughts (andīsha) nor the



'Anqā with its wing (shahpar) would cross the garden's courtyard (sahn) in a year - Adorning it are square suffas, portrayed in it are circular medallions (shamsa) On the suffas are pictures of war-elephants, and in the medallions are pictures of the sovereign king."

In such a paradise what king would not wish to idle away his time in the pursuit of pleasure? This sarāy is a combination of extensive gardens and palace; the gardens provide luxuriant growth and verdure in which to stroll in an essentially barren landscape (10). The pool is an important feature in a land where water is scarce and today wherever possible a Persian house has its hawz. The high walls and battlements, although they might also serve a defensive function, provide the privacy sought after in the East; along with the trees they allow for shade against the heat of the sun. The various parts of the palace, such as īvāns and the kākh, which may be regarded as a sort of summer-house in this context, along with the numerous suffas offer places of relaxation where a prince might drink his wine, listen to music or otherwise divert himself. Naturally the whole area is pervaded by luxury with precious decorations and pictures, even, the poet suggests, of the king himself; once again the high walls would serve the useful function of keeping out the prying eyes of the curious. Such a palace is an island of luxury and beauty, a 'stately pleasure dome'.

This particular palace must have made an impression on the poet for elsewhere he mentions the palace or garden of Ṭughānshāh, as in lls.1607-8, p.66 and elsewhere in the same poem. It was almost certainly situated in Herat, for lls.273, 266, 276 (in that order)

are quoted in Rawzāt al Jannāt (11).

We now have some idea as to how our poet's patrons passed their leisure time and in what surroundings this may have taken place. Such patrons would have needed little excuse to indulge in a little merry-making. However if the need was felt a pretext could be found in one of the regular festivals. The festivals of the Persian calendar which the poet mentions are Nawrūz and Mihrgān; an indication of how the king might celebrate is found in l.1986:

مهرگان از جشنهای خسرواست ای ملک  
خسروانی داده ی باید بجای خسروان

"O King, Mihrgān is one of the festivals of the Khusraws; at the feast of Khusraw<sup>royal</sup> wine is necessary."

It is a time not only for drinking, but also of joy and good fortune (l.1779). Of the Islamic festivals, Azraqī usually refers to them as 'Īd, presumably indicating the 'Īd al Fitr and possibly 'Īd-i Qurbān. Such festivals were announced by the beat of a drum at the court, as in l.2148. The merry-making takes a predictable course; it involves the beloved, wine and music (lls.2186-8).

It is also a convention of kingship that the king should be a good host (12). This mainly turns on bazm; also by literary convention the poets balance bazm by razm; e.g. l.2021:

اندر مهفاز لشکر و در بزم کسی ندیده  
مانده او مبارز و چالاک میزبان

"No one has ever seen in the ranks of the army and in the feast a hero and a vigilant master of the feast like him."

When relaxing the king has certain pleasures in which he is expected to participate; war is another of his duties, to which we shall now turn our attention.

### War and the Martial Virtues

Battle is one of the main occupations of the mamdūh.

It stands in contrast to the way in which he spent his leisure-hours. We shall first consider the means with which war was waged.

The most popular weapon used for close combat is the sword. The poet employs three terms: tīgh, shamshīr and balāruk (13). As we shall see the last-mentioned applies to a type of Indian sword. It is sometimes suggested that the shamshīr is the scimitar, a sword curved and broadening at the point; however, this seems to be a later development (14). There is little to suggest from the Dīvān that tīgh is anything but synonymous with shamshīr (15), nor is it specified whether swords are of any particular shape; 1.31, however, does describe a tīgh as hilāl-āsā (16), which suggests that its form resembled the crescent moon (17). This shape would make the sword a cutting weapon and as such may be the dominant type.

The most trenchant feature of Azraqī's imagery on the subject of the sword is that they are constantly referred to as pearlate or watered. Thus both terms, which are often translated as 'lustre', describe tīgh, e.g. 1.1190 and 1.1658, p.68 (gawhar), and 1.294, 1.642, 1.1291 and 1.2135 (āb); likewise shamshīr in 1.2028 (ābdāda), and in 1.1241 the air is like a forest of diamonds because of the swords, which may refer to the hardness of these swords or to their pearly surface, for balāruk in 1.1456 is called almās-chuhra. This type of sword is also called pearlate in 1.527 and 1.1645, p.67. Clearly in the poet's mind swords either have a pearly or a watery surface; both aspects may refer to their brightness like pearls or water (which, as we have seen above, is often described as silver). However, the imagery is based more solidly on fact than

poetical imagination.

In his book, The Traditional Crafts of Persia, H. Wulff discusses the methods known in the Middle Ages for making steel (fūlād, as apposed to āhan, wrought iron) and hence sword blades of damascene steel, (18). There were two different types of damascene steel; laminated damascene steel and crucible damascene steel. Wulff describes the manufacture of the former as follows: "Laminated damascene steel is produced by piling together bars of carbon steel and mild steel, as we call them today, and what Alkindi called "male" and "female" iron, welding them, drawing the welded packet under the hammer, folding it up, rewelding it, and repeating this procedure for a number of times. The end product consists of a great number of alternating laminations of mild and carbon steel. When the finished product after polishing is subjected to an etching process with vinegar or sulphuric acid (jouhar) (sic), a macroscopic structure of variegated, watery lines (fīrind, jouhar-dār) becomes apparent because the essentially ferritic laminations of the mild steel appear as white lines, whereas the pearlitic carbon steel with its possible enclosures of temper carbon will produce darker lines." The other type of steel, often known from its Indian name wootz, is produced in a crucible where mild steel is carburized with charcoal and other organic matter and cooled very carefully. Once again the characteristic damascene lines were visible on the surface of the ingot. After that the steel was forged into blades where the straight axes gradually changed into a wavy or mottled macrostructure.

There seems no doubt as to why poets describe swords as

ābdādā-watered; this description is more accurate than 'lustre'.

Gawhar may suggest either the pearlitic carbon steel of laminated damascene, or, especially in view of Wulff's references to 'jouhar' and 'jouhar-dār', to variegated, watery lines caused by etching with vinegar or sulphuric acid.

India in particular was famed for such steel, whence it spread throughout the Islamic world (19). Azraqī concurs with this view; although he does once mention a tīgh-i yamanī, Indian swords are more popular (e.g. l.476 shamshīr-i hindī, and l.1231 tīgh-i hindī). The term balāruk is itself an Indian sword or a particular type (20). In l.1229 the poet speaks of tāb-i duvāl which may be thought of as 'the lustre of a shining sword', for Steingass gives as one of the meanings of duvāl 'a glittering sword'.

Not very different from the sword is the khanjar, which is a dagger (21). As with the sword there is no information to indicate size or shape of the blade, such as whether it was curved or straight (22). The blades of these weapons were also made of damascene steel; there are references to gawhar in l.510 and the following, l.300:

ز ضنبر کنی چشم زندگانی      اگر نام تو بر نگاری بخنجر

"If you inscribe your name on your dagger, from your dagger you would make (flow) the well of life."

The metaphor of the 'well of life' is drawn from the watering on the blade. Another important point brought out in this line is that blades were inscribed - in this case with the name of the patron;

such inscriptions have a long history (we have already referred to the tradition associated with dhu'l fiqār) (23).

Whereas the sword (and the dagger) were the weapons of close combat, the only one which could be used effectively from a distance was the bow and arrow. The bow has long been a weapon associated with the Turks and thus the Sālījūqs (24). The usual words for bow and arrow are kamān and tīr, e.g. 1.1750, 1.1929 and 1.1969. Since archery was such an accomplished art it evolved a large vocabulary of specialised terms some of which are commonplace and with which Azraqī is familiar.

The most popular type of particular arrow which is mentioned in the Dīvān is the khadang made of white poplar, a frequent choice of poets (25). Azraqī considers its origin to be Transoxiana (Chīn) (1.1985). Arrows shafts of this material were favoured in Transoxiana, Khurasan and Iraq (26). The poet also mentions in 1.1181 a special type of khadang: khadang-i par-i magas; it is not clear what this is, although it may refer to a special form of arrow-head.

The normal word for arrow-head is paykān. The poet suggests that these arrow-heads were made of steel, as in 1.680 (paykān-i abdāda) and 1.308 (paykān-i pulād-paykar). They are also made of less exotic iron, 1.1984:

از بی پیکان که در دشمن نشاند آید تو      گویی از آهن بی در وی بروید استخوان

"From the great number of arrow-heads which your arrows have implanted in the enemy, you would say that within him grow bones of iron."

Two other types of arrow are found in the *Dīvān*: bīlak and nāvak. The former is an arrow with a head resembling the form of a spade; when vowelised as baylak it means a double-headed arrow. The type of arrow that the poet has in mind is settled by the context; it appears in l.1709, in the same description of Amīrānshāh hunting that is quoted above. Both Burhān-i Qāti' and Ādāb al Harb (27) state that it is a type used in hunting.

The nāvak is mentioned in l.399; it is a small arrow, perhaps similar to a dart (28).

Azraqī does not usually specify the type of bow employed by his patrons and their armies. However, two particular varieties of bow are mentioned. In l.2045 the poet speaks of 'the army of the long bow of the race of Turks' (lashgar-i buland-kamān az nizhād -i turk). The renown of the Turks as bowmen is clearly shown, and it is likely that the 'long bow' referred to is the famous Chāchī bow from the area of Turkestan now known as Tashkent.

The other variety of bow is found in l.447, where we learn of the 'two bow-ends of the Khwārazmī bow' (dū gūsha-yi kamān-i Khwārazmī). Bows from Khwārazm had long been famous (29); the centre part (khāna) was short but it had long bow-ends (gūsha) (30).

Azraqī also mentions a number of other terms associated with archery. L.798 refers to thumb-stall, bow-string and notch as well as bow and arrow:

اگر عودی تو از دست برگشیه تیر  
برویه ای ملک اندر زده کان سوار

"If your enemy releases the arrow from his thumb-stall, there would appear, O king, a notch in the bow-string."

We also learn from 1.360 that the archers were mounted and carried arrows in their belts (kamar).

Another piece of equipment for the well-equipped archer is the type of butt called burjās. This butt was particularly the type which was suspended in the air, as opposed to the hadaf which was placed on the ground (31). It is mentioned in 1.1694 as part of the equipment of Amīrānshāh's excursion.

The spear was another of the standard weapons of the time. Various types are recorded. Presumably they were used by the cavalry as lances. The sinān is cited, e.g. 1.746, and 1.2011; ṣumh occurs in 1.1716 and 1.1647, p.67. The term nīza is also used, as in 1.2303, and more especially the famous variety of lance called khattī after the village of Khutt in Bahrayn (32); 1.1645, p.67 cites nīza-yi khattī and 1.463 also has khattī. The final variety of spear is the zūbīn, which the mamdūh possess and with which he inflames the heavens in 1.297. Burhān-i Qāti' associates this weapon with Gīlān and says that it is a small spear with two points (shākh); on the other hand Ādāb al Harb links this weapon with Indians and Afghans and although it says nothing about it having two points, it is mentioned in the company of the shil which may mean a trident or similar weapon, according to Steingass (33). We cannot say what Azraqī exactly has in mind; can we regard it as a double-pointed javelin?

Lastly the poet alludes to one other weapon in the mamdūh's



armoury: the mace (gurz), <sup>like</sup> the sword, a weapon of close combat. It is found with the sword in 1.34 and 1.2210. Occasionally Azraqī is more specific about the type of mace used as in 1.640 and 1.1336. In the former the mace is described as gāvsār, ox-headed like the mace of Farīdūn, and in the latter the mace is said to be panjāh-mannī, weighing fifty mān, the inference being that such a mighty weapon could only be utilised by a mighty champion.

To afford protection to himself, the warrior has his shield and armour. The shield (sapar) is mentioned, for example, in 1.399, 1.381 and 1.533; the last mentioned line also includes the darga, however, from the context - a tashbīb on spring - it is not clear whether a shield is intended or a coat of mail.

The poet concerns himself with two main items of armour: jawshan and mighfar. Jawshan (coat of mail) is the most important and is mentioned, for example, in 1.2255, 1.1336 and 1.450. The links of mail (ghayba) are mentioned in 1.1240 and dir', which is armour of any material, in 1.1650, p.67. The armour our heroes wear is of iron and the poet speaks of āhan-pūsh in 1.2251. Under his coat of mail, he may have worn a vest, khafṭān, as this line suggests, 1.476:

ز خون شیرین روی در کفش سحر      ز خوی خفتان روی بر تنش تر

"In his palm the Hindī sword is balas ruby from the blood; on his body the Rūmī Khafṭān from sweat is wet."

The lines cited above as containing jawshan also contain the mighfar. Although the word means strictly that lattice-work of

mail that protects the neck and face, by extension it seems to indicate a helmet in general.

Azraqī's mamdūh fights on horseback; the horse is therefore important as an arm of war. There are two main regional types found in the Dīvān. When Amīrānshāh kills the ferocious lion (see above) even the Arab (tāzī) horses take fright (1.1703). Such animals were highly prized then as they were at a later stage in Europe. They were much used in warfare (34). The other main breed was that from Khuttal (1.1853) another area - on the northern shores of the Upper Oxus - long famous for its horses (35).

Associated with the horse was a complex vocabulary. Azraqī employs a number of terms indicating a horse; although these terms may indicate special qualities, in the Dīvān they appear to be used interchangeably for the type of horse the mamdūh would ride (36). Among such terms we find khing (1.1853), a grey horse, samand (1.1227), a light bay or cream charger, also very suitable for travelling (37), kura-yi tawsan (1.1576), a wild, high-blooded colt, takāwar (1.1273), a swift horse, and markab (e.g. 1.1863) meaning a horse in general.

If the poet appears to use various terms for horse interchangeably, he nevertheless is aware of the qualities necessary to provide a fitting mount for his patron. As an example we may cite lls.620-24, and the following, 1.304:

بکبر پلنگ و برنتار شاهین  
به قه سیون و زور غصنفر

"(A horse) with the pride of the leopard, the speed of the gerfalcon,

with the stature of a powerful camel and the strength of the lion."

Two other features of the horse must be mentioned. Firstly they are shod, as is seen from l.37, and l.1273; its shoes (na'l) are specifically moon-shaped as is evident from l.1863 (māh-paykar), and l.1227 (hilāl-shakl).

Secondly the horse in battle is clad in armour (bar-gustuvān) (l.478). This armour is similar to that worn by the rider, for it is also made of links of mail (ghayba) as in l.1865 and l.1974.

Thus the horse with its qualities of speed, strength and power, and in battle with its armour, complements in these respects the hero who rides it.

Finally with regard to the means of battle, we shall consider the banners which the poet mentions on many occasions. The poet uses two words for banner or flag: rāyat (e.g. l.1243), and 'alam (e.g. l.357, in the plural a'lām); 'alāmāt is also found in l.2095. The most striking feature of the banners of battle to which the poet alludes, is that the commonest device would seem to be the lion; the lion device is mentioned in the following lines: 357, 793, 2095 and 2209. In l.1236 the lion on the flag is also accompanied by the leopard (palang). Nor is the lion associated with one mamdūh in particular; it applies equally to Amīrānshāh and Tughānshāh as well as to the 'Nasīr al Mulk in l.2095. The lion device is even found on the banners of the enemy as l.1243 shows (see above). The other type of blazon to which the poet refers is that in which the air of battle is filled with green and red (āl) flags (rāyat) (l.1334) in a poem addressed to Tughānshāh. This evidence suggests

that Muslim princes of this period had as yet not developed heraldry into a systematic science which later blossomed in Medieval Islam and Europe (38).

From the *Dīvān* we have the following impression of the battles and wars in which the poet's mamdūh's engaged: fighting from horse-back, in armour and with their banners, the weapons of close combat were the sword and mace; weapons used from a distance were principally the bow and various types of spear. This impression is not one that is vitiated by any anachronism on the part of the poet; on the subject Professor Lambton writes: 'The chief weapon of the army was the bow and arrow. This the cavalry used from the saddle, shooting without dismounting or halting. Spears, of which the khattī spear was the most renowned, swords, clubs, shields, and a kind of horse-armour, were in use.' (39). Azraqī was also familiar with the war-elephant and the role it played in battle (see above).

#### The King in Battle

With such means the patron engaged in his wars. Naturally he is extremely proficient in the use of these arms; by the power of his arm he can demolish high mountains with his mace (1.1853). However, such skill is tempered with a little mercy, even chivalry, for in order not to shed blood without warning, his arrow whistles through the air to signal danger to the enemy (1.438).

As well as proficiency in his use of weapons, the king must above all possess bravery (40). Everytime the patron is involved in battle he is brave and valiant and vanquishes his enemy, as in

poem 13 which praises Amīrānshāh's campaigns in Sīstān. His bravery also includes fortitude and a certain toughness; in this same poem Azraqī tells us how his patron led for half a year a hard existence, l.467-8:

هفت و کوه زین داشت شش ماه  
بجای فواید باین و بستر

درین شش ماه زمانی بر نیاسود  
ز دار و گیر پیدن معسر

"For six months instead of the cushions and bed of his bedroom, he had pommel and saddle; during these six months he did not rest from the turmoil of the elephants of the camp."

As he is so brave and proficient it is little wonder that the patron carries all before him. In l.255, the poet exhorts the mamdūh to conquer lands (vilāyat), slay the foe, traverse the world and lead armies. Such is his omnipotence and the terror he inspires that (l.230):

زمین از زخم گزند تو می خواهد که بگیرد  
ولیکن راه او بسته است ازین گردون بهر اور

"The earth seeks to flee from the blow of his mace, but its way is blocked by the spacious heavens."

He is irresistible, and because of his piercing arrow the form of the enemy is bent like the bow (l.1929).

There are countless similar examples in every madh of how the patron is brave and victorious in his battles. Everything rebounds

to the glory of the prince and reflects the ideal of the perfect champion.

Such wars and battles are a feature of the age, as, the poet would have us believe, is the attendant bloodshed (41).

### The Virtues of Kingship

It is fortunate that studies exist on the Medieval theory of kingship during the time of the Saljūqs. After examining those aspects which Azraqī emphasises, it is possible to see the extent to which his view is consistent with contemporary theories.

As we have just seen the poet would have us believe that his patron spends much of his time defeating his enemies. The prince gains glory by such actions, but this is not his sole purpose.

Wars are waged to rid the land of tyranny, 1.317:

ایا شہزادی کی سیغ عدلت      زکیتی بہرہ دست ستمگر

"O king, whose sword of justice cut off the hand of the tyrant from the world."

The poet speaks of "the sword of justice". It is a just act, expected of the monarch, to extirpate oppression. Without oppression and in peace the country can flourish, 1.2264:

عالم آبادست تا تو پادشہ عالی      کشور آسودہ است تا تو شہزاد کشور

"The world is prosperous as long as you are the noble king; the country is peaceful as long as you are the ruler of the country."

The king's justice brings peace and prosperity to all his

subjects. As Azraqī is a poet he is particularly dependent upon the generosity of his patrons and thus like all panegyric poets he is anxious to point out the liberality of his patrons, and every qaṣīda contains the plea that some of this liberality should come the poet's way. It is also clearly a long-standing tradition which the patron should emulate; l.1805 (to Abū'l Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muhammad):

ای خداوندی که بر رسم بزرگان قدیم  
درج بخشی بی بها و مال بخشی را بگان

"O lord in the manner of the great ones of the past,<sup>yy</sup> grant priceless caskets (of jewels) and grant wealth freely."

However just and generous the mamdūh may be, he must also have the assistance of religion (see also above 'The Islamic Tradition'). We have already attempted to show the importance of the Islamic tradition in the Dīvān. This importance in the character of the patron may be seen in the official titles and honorifics given to him and which the poet loses no opportunity to mention. Thus, for example, we learn of Ṭughānshāh's honorifics in l.1831, where he is called shamshīr-i mīr-al mu'minīn, shams-i dawlat, zayn-i millat and kahf-i ummat (42). From l.354 we learn that Amīrānshāh is modest like 'Uthmān, bold like 'Alī, pious like Abū Bakr and firm like 'Umar. It is the poet's hope and prayer that God will protect his king, l.824:

نگهبان تو بادا خدای عزوجل  
سال و ماه و بنیک و به و بدیل و نهار

"May the Glorious Lord watch over you for years and months, through good and bad and at night and day."

Although justice, the aid of God and generosity are the qualities which Azraqī considers to be primary in a king, there are also others he enumerates. All these qualities combined constitute kingship and its attendant majesty. The king also possesses, for example, gravity (ʔazānat), and grace (laʔāfat) (1.351), his power extends to other kings (1.27), he has purity of knowledge and wisdom (1.782) and eloquence (1.783), and farr (1.489), the old Iranian idea of divine splendour vested in a king (43). A king also holds outward signs of his position which are indicated by insignia; thus 1.2306 refers to dihīm, nigīn, takht and afsar; 1.2125 to the tughrā and 1.1483 to the khātim; 1.2019 mentions tāj. The king also has his own coinage in gold and silver whereon his name is inscribed (1.412).

The Medieval Persian theory of kingship (44) shows a development from the classical theory. In the latter, mainly expounded in juridical works, the state's function is the preservation of pure Islam, i.e. under the caliph who executes and represents the sacred law; society under Islam is regulated and each is assured his due function. The ruler needed to possess for his task 'adāla and 'ilm (i.e. knowledge of the traditional Muslim sciences for legal interpretation). Injustice verged on irreligion. As the shepherd of his people the ruler is patriarchal, a feature retained in the Medieval period, especially by al Ghazālī, although the ruler becomes mainly autocratic. Administrative handbooks, mirrors and philosophical works come to display the Medieval theory, although the mirrors are mainly concerned with the art of government. An inherent conservatism is apparent, for in order to be effective the ruler must maintain stability. Sasanian influence in the later theory, deriving from the link between the Sasanians and Zoroastrianism, where every member of society has his allotted place and where the healthy



society is co-terminous with good religion. The whole structure is summed up by the mean between excess and deficiency. As in the Sasanian theory there is the king as the representative of God on earth; during our period we find the parallel with the ruler as the shadow of God on earth. The Medieval theory centres around the sulṭān and not the imām. The ideal of justice becomes more important in order to provide the protection and discipline for each to fulfil his destiny (as in the view of Ibn al Balkhī). For Niẓām al Mulk the ruler needs divine light and not the membership of Quraysh. He also emphasises justice which leads to prosperity and stability, and sees a connection between right religion and stability. Al Ghazālī in Nasīhat al Mulūk also stresses justice - that justice which extends to all the rulers servants. As the ruler is divinely chosen and possessed of divine light, love of and obedience to him is encumbent upon all men.

In the various mirrors for princes - Qābūsnāma being contemporary is particularly relevant for us - we find that expediency is the main consideration. It is the effectiveness of the king's authority which leads to order and the king must concern himself with the civilian population's welfare as well as that of the military. There is also the stress on justice which if effective will lead to general prosperity.

From the picture of the ideal king (45) that Azraqī's poems present, a combination of these elements is to be seen. The poet lays weight upon the justice of the king, a justice which he maintains by his wars and the defeat of enemy and oppressor. In the ensuing

peace the welfare of his country and subjects increases and in such an atmosphere right religion may flourish.

The poet emphasises certain features traditionally associated with kingship. Not only does this indicate his own vested interests but it also shows the balance and conservatism of society; the king has his role to fill and the more he tends to perfection then the greater the equilibrium and harmony in his divinely appointed society. Thus the king wins his battles, is wise, gracious and majestic. Part of his office also demands that he is magnanimous. As he relies on the goodwill and generosity of the king for his livelihood, Azraqī, not unnaturally, gives much space to magnanimity and also to the recreational pursuits of the king - progresses, hunting, wine, song and feasting - in which he might be expected to participate. Yet all these features of the recreational pleasures of the king are part of his office; the better they are accomplished the happier the country - and the poet.

KINGSHIP - NOTES

- 1) E. G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, vol. 11, C.U.P., 1969, p.22.
- 2) For references to Qābūs-nāma in this paragraph, see Kai Kā'ūs b. Iskandar, Qābūs-nāma, ed. Levy, Gibb Mem. New Series XVlll, London 1951, chap.18, pp.52-4.
- 3) *ibid*, p.53.
- 4) There are post-Sāljuq miniatures illustrating such scenes in the same tradition; e.g. see B. Gray, Persian Miniatures from Ancient Manuscripts, Collins-Unesco 1962, plate 22, showing mounted hunters employing bow and arrow.
- 5) Qābūs-nāma, p.37.
- 6) Nizam al Mulk, Siyāsāt-nāma, trans. by H. Darke, London 1960, p.91 and Herodotus, The Histories, London 1965, p.69.
- 7) Siyāsāt-nāma, p.93.
- 8) Qābūs-nāma, p.43.
- 9) *ibid*, chaps. 35 and 36.
- 10) For an example of a later miniature illustrating such a scene, see Gray, *op.cit.*, pl.3 and pl.11; these miniatures portray elements such as the garden, pool, wine and the king enthroned in his pavilion.

- 11) Rawḡat al Jannāt, p.85.
- 12) Qābūs-nāma, chap. 12.
- 13) For the vowelling of this word, see Burhān-i Qāti', 'bar vazn-i tabārūk'.
- 14) J. Prawer, The World of the Crusaders, London 1972.
- 15) See Fakhr-i Mudabbir, Ādāb al Ḥarb, ed. Khwānsārī, Tehran 1346, p.258 where shamshīr and tīgh are used without any apparent distinction.  
  
(Although this work is concerned with North India and dates from the 13th century, it is 'tainted with an antiquarianism'), (see S. Digby, War-horse and Elephant, Oxford 1971, p.15).
- 16) Nafīsī reads hilāl-āsā and his ghalatnāma stands in need of correction; 'Abd al Rasūlī reads hilāl-āsā (p.3).
- 17) For the shape of Persian swords, see P. S. Rawson, The Indian Sword, Copenhagen 1967, p.15-16.
- 18) It seems that little work has been done on Persian weaponry; we are mainly indebted to the work of scholars such as Irvine and Egeton, Lord of Tatton on Indian arms; therefore a certain caution is necessary.
- 18) For this and the following see H. E. Wulff, The Traditional Crafts of Persia, M.I.T. 1966, pp.8-10 and Rawson, op.cit. p.19-20.
- 19) Wulff, loc.cit. and Digby, op.cit. p.19.
- 20) Ādāb al Ḥarb, p.258 and note; parālūk = palārūk = balārūk.
- 21) A. S. Beveridge, Bāburnāma in English, London 1969, p.528 translates khanjar as 'hanger' which is a short sword originally hung from the belt.

- 22) Beveridge, loc.cit., also differentiates other daggers; thus kārd = Hindī knife and jamd'har = a broad dagger.
- 23) For inscriptions on blades see Rawson, op.cit., p.21.
- 24) See R. C. Smail, Crusading Warfare 1097 - 1193, C.U.P., 1956, pp.75-80, where it is pointed out how the fame of the Turks as fighters was widespread amongst the Franks and Byzantines. The Turkish forces were composite; they included footmen whose function is unclear and there were horsemen who were not armed with the bow. However, the bow was the principle weapon and was used from the saddle. Being much quicker in manoeuvre and probably possessing generally lighter weapons, the Muslim forces had an advantage over the Crusaders and were able to employ their well-tested strategies with success.
- 25) e.g. Shāhnāma, Turner-Macon, i 71, and for panegyricists see De Fouchécour, p.91.
- 26) Digby, op.cit., p.17.
- 27) Ādāb al Harb, p.242.
- 28) It was also a hollow wooden device in which the tīr-i nāvak was placed then shot, or an iron tube (nāv) in which a small arrow was placed, then put in the bow and shot (Burhān-i Qāti'). The line in question refers to the arrow for it has a notch (sūfār) for the bow-string.
- 29) Barthold, Turkestan, Gibb New Mem. Series V, 1968, when reviewing the Sāmānid period, quotes Maqdisī: ".....nothing to equal the bows of Khoresmia" (p.238).
- 30) Ādāb al Harb, p.242.

- 31) See Burhān-i Qatī' and Ādāb al Harb, p.241, where burjās and hadaf are both mentioned and are thus thought of as being different.
- 32) Ādāb al Harb, p.261; the text reads khut(t).
- 33) *ibid*, p.260.
- 34) See Digby, *op.cit.*, pp.31-2 and also the lengths to which the Delhi Sultanate went to obtain them.
- 35) See Le Strange, Lands, p.438, Hudūd al 'Ālam p.119 and Barthold *loc.cit.*
- 36) See Ādāb al Harb, pp.190-2 and p.184 for an indication of the vast terminology and where the colour of horses reveals their qualities and aptitudes; also see Qābūs-nāma, chap. 25 pp.69-72 on how to buy a horse.
- 37) Ādāb al Harb, p.184: agar rāh-raftan khwāhī .....
- 38) c.f. The Legacy of Islam, ed. by Arnold and Guillaume, O.U.P. 1968, pp.131-2.
- 39) *Camb. History of Iran*, V, p.229.
- 40) See Qābūs-nāma, p.55.
- 41) Although wars were far from uncommon at this period, it must be borne in mind that the poet's reference to the king's battles and his successes are mainly poetic license and not necessarily actual events.
- 42) See Siyāsat-nāma, pp.152-3, where Niẓām al Mulk laments the way in which titles had become so commonplace in his time.  
  
Secular titles, such as Shams al Dawla, may be considered relevant here for the division between state and religion did not exist during this period (see Lambton, C.H.I. V, p.205).

- 43) Siyāsatnāma, p.120, ed.'s note.
- 44) For this and the succeeding paragraph see Lambton, Justice in the Medieval Persian Theory of Kingship, Studia Islamica, XVII, pp.91-119, Paris, 1962 and C.H.I. V, pp.205-219.
- 45) When speaking of kingship and the Dīvān, we are concerning ourselves with the poet's royal masters. Ṭughānshāh and Amīrānshāh. When praising other mamdūhān, such as those who are government officials, the poet lays suitable emphasis upon the abilities such officials should possess; e.g. Abū Ḥasan, in 1.69 and 1.70 is praised in terms of kilk u kitāb, and for his eloquence in versification; 'Alī b. Muḥammad is praised for his aspirations (himmat) and wisdom (1.851).

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